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**THE**  
**CHURCH OF THE BIBLE.**

Entered at Stationer's Hall.

THE  
CHURCH OF THE BIBLE;  
OR,  
SCRIPTURE TESTIMONIES  
TO  
CATHOLIC DOCTRINES & CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES;  
COLLECTED AND CONSIDERED, IN  
A SERIES OF POPULAR DISCOURSES,  
ADDRESSED CHIEFLY TO NON-CATHOLICS  
BY  
FREDERICK OAKELEY, M.A.  
PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER.



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"Declaratio sermonum tuorum illuminat: et intellectum dat parvulis."  
Ps. cxviii. 130.

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LONDON:  
CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET;  
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1857.

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LONDON :

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LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS.

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TO  
THE VERY REV. JOHN MAGUIRE, D.D.  
CANON AND VICAR GENERAL.

---

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IN dedicating this little volume to you I must reverse the rule usual in such cases, and begin by saying, that I have *not* requested your permission to connect your name with it.

I have not requested that favour, because I felt unwilling to involve one holding your high official position in the diocese in any public responsibility for a work of a religious, though not strictly theological, character, which you had not previously read.

But I cannot say that this was my only reason for omitting the customary formality. I cannot bring myself to stand upon ceremony with friends like yourself; and, since I have taken the utmost practicable pains to secure my book from error, and, on all matters about which I had any doubt, have consulted those whose opinion on such subjects we mutually

respect, I confess to having readily fallen in with a view of the case which enabled me to waive all forms, and simply throw myself upon your indulgence.

Meanwhile, there are two very obvious reasons why I should wish to inscribe this book to you: the one, its subject, and the other, its occasion. Anything, however humble, which is intended to draw out the Catholic meaning of the Bible will, I know, find favour, at least for its motive and object, at the hands of such a lover both of the Church and of the Holy Scriptures as yourself. And anything directly connected with my ministry at St. John's Islington, would seem incomplete, did it not come forth under the shelter of a name to which that ministry owes so much of any little effect which, by the blessing of God, may have attended it.

May I be permitted to add one reason more? As I cannot hope for a much longer time of active service in the cause of our dear and holy Mother, I am anxious to leave on record a testimony of my gratitude to yourself, both personally, and as the representative of that body of English Catholic Clergy, of hereditary faith and long-standing in the sacred Order, to whom I, as some time a stranger to you all, feel myself so largely indebted. In common, I suppose, with many converts from Anglicanism, one of the most trying of the selfish anxieties which I endured on becoming a Catholic, was lest I should fail to meet, in the Church I was entering, with that for-

bearance towards my faults, and that indulgent estimate of my intentions, to which I had owed so much among those whom I was leaving. You, my dear Sir, are one of the many to whose uniform kindness I can appeal whenever the same apprehensions are urged by others as a drawback upon conversion, or a ground of misgiving.

Believe me,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

F. OAKELEY.

ST. JOHN'S, ISLINGTON.

*Easter, 1857.*



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE reasons which have led to the publication of this little volume will be made clear by stating the circumstances under which the Discourses, or Lectures, composing it, were delivered.

The Catholic church at Islington is frequented, on the Sunday evenings, by a large number of Protestants, whose regular attendance, and uniform propriety of demeanour, seem to indicate that they are actuated, not by mere idle curiosity, but by a sincere desire of acquainting themselves with the nature of the Catholic religion. Hence, the author felt that it became a part of his pastoral responsibilities to do what he could towards the satisfaction of these apparently honest inquirers; and the only difficulty was to find a subject comprehensive enough for a course of instructions which might answer the proposed end, without being at the same time simply useless to the Catholic portion of the auditory, or (which would have been still worse) ministering to the spirit of idle controversy. The subject

actually chosen, and embodied in the present series, recommended itself to the author's mind as one which held out the prospect of conveying information to strangers, and obviating popular misconceptions of our religion, while it afforded the opportunity of bringing out a good deal of Scripture in as uncontroversial a form as the nature of the case admitted. Another reason which weighed with him in selecting this particular subject was, that he had found the line of argument involved in it serviceable to himself at a time when he was in the situation of those whom he was seeking to benefit.

The choice has been justified to this extent: that while, on the one hand, the Lectures have excited no controversial hostility whatever, they have, on the other, directly resulted in more than one conversion to the Catholic Church. These facts have induced the author, with the advice of persons whose judgment he respects, to publish the series; and, in order to render it as useful as he could, he has entirely recast, and in several instances recomposed, the Lectures,—a fact sufficient to account for the differences which those who heard them will detect between the course as preached and as now published.

A Bible and a Concordance have been (speaking broadly) the only books of reference consulted

with a view to the argument. That argument being of the "*ad hominem*" class, it was the author's object to put himself as much as possible in the position of his hearers and readers. For, since he was asking them to forego extrinsic helps, on their side, he felt that he had no right to take advantage, on his own, of such assistance as, however legitimate in itself, might fairly have been considered to come within the forbidden province. For the same reason he has avoided, to a great extent, even talking over the subject with friends; feeling it, on the whole, better to sacrifice the great benefit of the light they could have thrown upon it than to weaken his argumentative position with those for whom (and not for well instructed Catholics) the course is chiefly intended.

But to any one who considers how difficult it is to sustain a forced character for any length of time, it need hardly be said that these resolutions could not be acted upon to the letter. And it is fair to state explicitly in what points a departure has been made from them.

As to approved commentaries, the author has faithfully noticed, in the right places, the very trifling use he has made of them. The chief exception to the rule he had laid down for himself with respect to this kind of assistance, is in the case of Father Passaglia's Treatise on the Su-



premacy. The former half of the Lecture on St. Peter in the present course had been written, as it stands, before the author had even seen Father Passaglia's work, which he met with accidentally at a friend's house; so that any correspondence between the arguments of that Lecture and those of Father Passaglia's Treatise is a *bond fide* coincidence. This remark, however, does not apply equally to the second half of the Lecture on St. Peter, which was written under the advantage of having hastily looked over Father Passaglia's work, though without the opportunity of access to it at the time.

With respect, again, to the assistance of friends, a considerable qualification must be put upon the statement which has generally disclaimed it. The leading idea of the Discourse on "Authoritative Teaching through the action of a Body Politic" (as distinct from the working out of that idea, which is the author's own), and the long Note at the end of the Discourse on St. Peter, were furnished by Dr. Ward of Old Hall; a name sufficient to guarantee the argumentative ability and theological erudition of whatever can be referred to it. With the additional exception of one or two valuable hints derived from conversation with another friend, the author must sustain the undivided responsibility of his work.

Discrepancies between the Catholic and Protestant versions of the Bible have been pointed out, as the nature of the argument required, in the few instances in which they appeared to be of sufficient importance.

The reader will please to take notice that the opening remarks of Discourse IX. should be referred to that on "Sacraments and Sacramental Religion," and not specially, as the actual text would imply, to that on the Blessed Eucharist. These two lectures originally formed but one, and they were afterwards separated without a corresponding change in the reference.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S, ISLINGTON.

*Easter, 1857.*



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THE  
CHURCH OF THE BIBLE.

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DISCOURSE I.

THE PROVIDENTIAL USE OF THE BIBLE TO  
NON-CATHOLICS.

MANY of us are able to remember the time when it was warmly discussed in this country, whether the cause of true religion were more likely to gain or to lose by the unrestricted circulation of the Bible. This question was agitated, not, as might have been expected, between Catholics and Protestants, but by Protestants among themselves: one party maintaining that no good, to say the least, could come of diffusing the Scriptures among all classes of persons without some accompanying guarantee for a correct interpretation of their meaning; the other with equal earnestness contending that the Bible might be expected, on religious grounds, to reveal all necessary truth to such as should approach the study of it in a right spirit and with the requisite preparation. The controversy, like others of the same date and character, has died out with the lapse of time, and received its settlement by the progress of events. It has been ordained, or permitted, by Divine Providence, that the Bible, in

the Protestant version, shall be spread from one end of the British Empire to the other, and thus be made accessible to every one who is capable of reading it. In the place then of discussing the question upon its abstract merits, we have now rather to survey this great religious experiment in its actual operation, to try and estimate its providential bearings, to consider the probable causes of its failure, if failed it have, or the conditions of its success, if success be its destiny.

Whether the design have prospered in a way commensurate with the hopes and wishes of its zealous promoters, is a matter of which a Catholic is not in a position to judge. But if the objects proposed were the simplification and consolidation of the national belief, and the improvement of the national morality, the attempt has certainly been attended, as yet, with but questionable success. For it is generally admitted, that at no former period since the great change of religion, has this country been more vexed by religious controversy than during the last few years; while, if any amelioration at all have taken place during the same interval in the moral habits or tone of society, it is to be found in those ranks which have always had free access to the Scriptures, rather than in those for whose benefit the recent movement was more immediately intended.

It ought, however, in all fairness to be remembered, that coincidences are easily mistaken for cause and effect. It may be natural enough for those who originally argued against the indiscriminate circulation of the Scriptures to see in these adverse appearances the verification of their own predictions. But it is quite conceivable that, after all, there may be no real connection between

the facts thus brought to bear upon one another. The religious divisions of our day and country, and the admitted increase of crime among certain classes of the community, may be due to causes which the general diffusion of the Bible could neither prevent nor overrule. Or, on the other hand, the agitation of religious questions, so characteristic of the day, may be regarded by some as a sign rather of healthy fermentation, than of increasing disunion, and thus may be set down as a favourable rather than an adverse result of the Scripture movement. The question at any rate, however it may be determined, presents many features of interesting speculation, and, as I cannot but feel also, many elements of profitable inference. And if a Catholic be not judged wholly incapable of entering into its merits and bearings, he has this especial inducement for undertaking the task, that it may serve to furnish, if not topics of sympathy, yet at least grounds of amicable discussion, with those from whom we differ in too many points, not to make us studious of occasions which hold out the hope of approximation, without the risk of compromise.

There are, of course, features in the great Scripture movement which a Catholic is unable to regard with any kind of complacency. The very principle upon which it proceeds is opposed to the first idea of a "Teaching" Church. According to Catholic doctrine, the written Word of God is but one of the two great fountains of revealed Truth, from which the Church derives the materials which she has collected, and presents to the world, in the form of her Dogmatic Faith. But the principle upon which the Scriptures are distributed indiscriminately and without any au-



thorized key to their interpretation, supposes that each individual person is capable of arriving at their true sense, and of either forming his religion out of them, or testing by them the tenets of the religion in which he happens to have been educated. Again, the Bible is commonly distributed through the medium of a translation, which Catholics cannot but regard as in a very material degree erroneous or defective, and which has the farther and most serious disadvantage, in their sight, of having been undertaken by persons who had no proper warrant to innovate upon the ancient and received Version.

Yet it does not appear why a Catholic should be precluded by either of these judgments from regarding the universal dissemination of the Protestant Scriptures as a fact which may have a providential tendency to good, and which entails, moreover, a definite obligation upon those who are brought under its immediate operation and influence.

For the Scriptures, even upon the very lowest estimate which can be formed of them, contain an authentic history of the two great Revelations made by God to man, together with a statement of most important moral truths, sufficiently intelligible in their general effect to every candid reader. The same Scriptures are moreover received by a great portion of the Protestant public as the Inspired Word of God; and it is quite consistent with Catholic doctrine to believe that, where thus received in humility and good faith, the dispositions of the receiver may, through the infinite goodness of God, supply, in a measure, the intrinsic defect of the instrument; so that a version of the Scriptures which, in the Catholic

estimate, is faulty and unauthorized, may become a real channel of grace and benediction to those who sincerely, and in ignorance, accept it as the true Word of God. Moreover, there is nothing to make us suppose that the errors and defects of the Protestant version, be they more or fewer, are of a magnitude sufficient to neutralize, however they may impair, the benefit of which the study of the Bible might be productive in the case of one who regards it as no more than authentic history; still less in that of one who reads it in a religious spirit as an inspired declaration of God's holy Word and Will.

And farther: when it is said by Catholics that Private Judgment is wholly insufficient to supply the place of ecclesiastical authority and direction, it is not meant that private judgment is no guide at all to the understanding and use of the Scriptures. There are, surely, many great truths which are written in the Bible with a clearness not to be mistaken. There are those matters of history which require towards their acceptance no condition but that of a belief in the authenticity of the volume in which they are contained, and, towards their elucidation, no gifts but those of reason and intelligence. There are also those moral lessons upon the general meaning of which the consent of the religious portion of mankind leaves no question whatever. Moreover, the power of understanding the true sense of Scripture, is capable of being indefinitely increased (even apart from the aid of any divinely appointed guide) by means of personal humility, purity of heart, and reliance upon God. Hence it seems quite possible for a Catholic, without the slightest compromise of his own principles, to feel that the

present increased facility of access to the Bible may have a providential purpose for good, and become the means, under God, of leading to Christ our Lord those souls which duly estimate, and rightly discharge, their responsibility in respect of it.

The general diffusion of the Protestant Scriptures being then a fact altogether too important in its character, and too critical in its issues, to be dismissed as the mere sport of accident or fashion of the day, it remains to inquire what may be thought to be its providential scope, and in what light individuals may regard it in its bearing upon their own duties and responsibilities?

There are several hypotheses upon which the providential use of the Bible to non-Catholics might conceivably be explained. One account might be, that the Scriptures are given directly by God to man, for the purpose of enabling him to know all that he is to believe and to do; and that to this end, Almighty God supplies, together with the gift, the right and effectual means of using it. Such a use of the Scriptures is quite conceivable in the abstract; but the testimony both of history and experience is overwhelmingly against it; because it is certain that for the first fifteen centuries of Christianity, no period can be named at which any such view of the use and purpose of the written Word was formally introduced into the Christian body; while it is capable even of demonstration, that the Scriptures themselves recognize no such view of their own character, and were never employed for any such purpose during the lives of the Apostles. Now, when it is considered what an enormous difference

is involved in the question, whether man's appointed informant in religion be a living authority, or a collection of documents open to divers interpretations; the fact of there being no record in ecclesiastical history, of a transition from the first of these methods to the second, must appear in the judgment of every candid and thoughtful inquirer quite decisive upon the point in debate.

And if the method which makes Scripture the sole and self-interpreting oracle of the Divine voice, be thus plainly at variance with historical facts, it certainly receives no greater support from the testimony of experience. The whole course of nature, to say nothing of the evidence of the Scriptures themselves, proclaims with the most impressive unanimity, that God is the author not of confusion, but of peace. The Scriptures themselves add, that it is the especial office of the Divine Spirit to "make men to be of one character in a house,"\* and illustrate this precious truth, by the history of His descent on the great Day of Pentecost, when He not only made hearts and minds to be as one, but harmonized even those diversities of language which the sin of man had introduced into the world. Is it not, then, plainly impossible to read the writing of the Spirit's hand in that discordance of religious opinion which is the actual result of private judgment brought to bear upon the interpretation of the Bible? Is it not a serious temptation in the way of the rationalist or sceptic to doubt the inspiration of that volume whose single authority is alike pleaded by Protestants for the most opposite views of religious truth, representing in their aggregate appearance the confusion of Babel

\* See Ps. lxxvii. 7 (P. V. lxxviii. 6).

rather than the unity of Pentecost? It is manifest that God has not opened the true sense to these interpreters as a body, otherwise He would be the Author of contradiction; and if He have revealed it to some only among them, who shall judge among the multitude of pretensions, which of the whole number is to be preferred to the rest?

But, in truth, it needs only to look with attention into the Scriptures themselves in order to see that they were never intended to supersede the office of a living teacher and interpreter. A special promise of divine illumination, in the case of each individual, towards understanding them, would of course determine the question against all appearances to the contrary. But, in default of any such assurance, the internal evidence of the Bible itself is conclusive against its having been intended to teach man his religion. No book can be imagined which is less like a formulary of faith, or even a religious treatise. The very characteristic of the Sacred Writings (especially of the Four Gospels) is that they are unsystematic, and even unmethodical, in the form of their disclosures. This is not their defect (far be it from us to say so!), but their excellence, and one of the most impressive of all the internal tokens of their Divine origin. But if we take advantage of the fact as an argument for Christianity, we must submit to its force as a testimony against private judgment. The Old Testament and the New (yet more) are made up of books, each of which seems directed to its own immediate end, with little of obvious bearing upon its companions. Nothing but the belief of a Divine inspiration overruling all these peculiarities to a common

object can reconcile us to the idea that documents of such various human authorship, so special, or, again, so indefinite, in their application, are really designed for the common edification of all, in whatever age or country. But Inspiration, though it decides the fact, does not remove the difficulty. It does not of itself enable us to determine absolutely what portion of this inspired matter is of local and temporary, what of universal and perpetual obligation; what is to be received literally, and what with reserve; what is figure, and what, plain-speaking; what is of necessary faith, and what is matter of pious opinion; what is of duty, what expedient merely, or of counsel. And this uncertainty as to the subject-matter of the Christian religion it surely is, which explains in great part the phenomena of the religious world. For it leaves free scope to such as recognize no authoritative interpreter of the written Word, for the operation of all those human feelings which indispose men to believe or practise more than they can help, or otherwise than as their prejudices and passions incline them. How, indeed, can they agree in religion, except they have some one to guide them; to clear up the difficulties of Scripture, harmonize its incongruities, and reconcile its apparent contradictions? Such was precisely the want expressed by Philip the Deacon's Ethiopian convert, though well versed in the Prophecies;\* such, the service which Aquila and Priscilla rendered to Apollo, who, "though mighty in the Scriptures," needed "more perfect" instruction.†

Hence it is that the theory of the sufficiency of private judgment as an interpreter of the Bible

\* Acts, viii. 31.

† Ib. xviii. 26.

is largely modified in practice; and, although in words it is retained as a distinct opinion, yet in fact it gives way to another notion of the use of Scripture, which makes the Bible, not indeed the all-sufficient teacher of religion, but the text-book of some actual religious system. This is the light in which it is practically regarded by the great body of Protestants in this country, including even the members of the Established Church. The disciples of these various systems first receive the characteristic tenets of their body upon the authority of their parents and teachers; and then are directed to the Bible for the proof of those tenets. The Established Church, which recognizes the principle of authority far more definitely than any other religious community in this country (except the Catholic), still refers its members to Scripture (that is, of course, to their own judgment of Scripture) as the warrant for its teaching and the test of its authority.

But it is plain that this view of the use of Scripture admits of being referred, either to the last-mentioned, or to the Catholic. As it stands, it is amenable to the criticism to which the Catholic theory (though often actually subjected to it) is certainly not amenable; of involving, namely, what is called in logic a "vicious circle." For it first interprets Scripture by the light of the particular system, and then that system by the light of Scripture. If the system require to be tested by Scripture, how does it presume itself to interpret Scripture? And if it be capable of standing alone, why is private judgment appealed to in its support? Or how can Scripture assume opposite characters in its regard, and from its subject become its critic? Either, therefore, the system is

amenable to private judgment, in which case the theory on which it proceeds is only that of private judgment in another form ; or it is not amenable to private judgment ; in which case, the theory does not differ in principle from the Catholic. In so far as the Bible is studied under a bias, its interpretation is referred to a standard external to itself, as well as to the mind of the student. On the Catholic principle, this standard is the voice of the Church ; on what may be called the semi-Catholic, it is the tradition of the particular body, or the presumed authority of certain private teachers. In either of the latter cases the right of private judgment is preserved inviolate.

And this is surely true, even though, as with one section of the Church Establishment, the Fathers are brought in to aid the work of Scripture interpretation. Here, indeed, Private Judgment mounts a pedestal, and assumes the badges of authority ; but is, at last, no more than the individual in the judge's robes. Moreover, Private Judgment not merely simulates the judge, but packs the jury. She chooses the Fathers of a particular epoch in the history of the Church, to the exclusion of all the rest. She selects such of their works, and such parts of them, as make for her object. And having first explained Scripture by them, she next explains them by commentaries of her own. And, after all, the authorities of the body, which she thus seeks to elevate, refuse to recognize her aid, and to indorse her acts ; so that she encounters all the odium of the Catholic hypothesis, without either attaining its consistency or enjoying its protection.

There remains yet a fourth view of the providential use of Scripture out of the Catholic Church,



which seems clear of the objections attaching to the rest. What if the Bible be intended, not indeed as a final authority on religion, but as a guide, or index, to the quarter in which that final authority resides? I do not wish, at present, to assume what that quarter is; but all serious persons must admit, that a true religion there must be somewhere on earth, and that this true religion can be but One. Now is it not in the first place certain, that as the normal state of a Catholic (as such) is *submission*, so the normal state of a Protestant (as such) is *inquiry*? Protestants, indeed, are born into very various religious atmospheres. For a while they adopt the tenets of their parents and their teachers; but as time goes on, they not merely will inquire, but have in fact a right to do so in virtue of their very profession. Moreover, if these inquiries turn against the system in which they have been brought up, they have a further right, on the Protestant hypothesis, to relinquish that system. No religious body, except the Catholic Church, can impose allegiance to itself as a duty, or count secession from itself a sin. And, where duty does not come in, liberty remains. Other sins may be committed, great and many, in the *mode* of changing a religious system, and even in the *mode* of becoming a Catholic. But the *act* is a sin only when a religious communion claims, like the Catholic, a right over the faith and consciences of its subjects. If the communion in which a person may happen to be born and bred, have claims upon him which make it a sin under any circumstances to leave such body, then indeed the Dissenter sins in joining the Established Church of England, and the member of the Establishment in coming over to us. But,

on that view, the Arian sinned equally in becoming a Catholic; nay, the Jew in becoming a Christian. Outside the Catholic Church, a change of religion is merely a change of spiritual quarters. It may involve fickleness, precipitation, caprice, resentment, and all kinds of faults or sins; it is never otherwise than a most serious step in itself, and one not to be adventured upon without the utmost deliberation and the sincerest conviction. But the peculiar sin of apostasy it can never include under systems whose boast, as well as allowance, is perfect liberty of conscience.

But at least the Catholic Preacher, when he sees before him some hundred or more Protestants who, by their own voluntary act, without pressure or even solicitation, have repaired to a Catholic church to witness its ceremonies and listen to its instructions, can have no reason to doubt that *their* object, at any rate, must be inquiry; unless, indeed, it be some less creditable motive which it would be uncharitable to impute, without certain knowledge, to any one, and contrary to experience to suppose could sway so considerable a number of persons accidentally and without concert brought together from so many various places.

Is it not, then, both conceivable, and in accordance with fact, that the Scriptures, as now collected into a volume, may be intended to serve the purpose which they answered (as far as they then existed) in our Saviour's time, as a "school-master," or rather "pedagogue," who leads the learner up to his true, authoritative, and final Teacher?\* "Search the Scriptures," said our Lord to the Jews, "for ye think in them to have

\* See Gal. iii. 24.

life everlasting, and the same are they that give testimony of Me.”\* If you will but grant, as a bare possibility, that there exists in the world at this time among the many claimants upon your religious allegiance one only true counterpart of the Gospel, wherever and whatever that be, it is certain that the analogy of the case would justify us in giving to the Bible the same place with respect to it, which the Jewish Scriptures occupied in relation to that Divine Truth which our Lord came into the world to teach with sovereign authority. The Church, which, upon this view, would represent our Lord in the world at the present time, might hold His very language, and say to such as questioned her claims: “Believe me to be what I profess to be by reason of those manifest tokens of a Divine character and mission which I present to you on my very front. But if not; if you still demand some further ‘sign’ of my authority, go to your own Scriptures which you believe to contain whatsoever is necessary to salvation: *search* them,—do not glance at them,—search them in their entirety; search them, above all, with pure hearts and fervent minds, apart from the bias of hereditary prejudice, unswayed by the influence of popular glosses; and you will find that they, whose claims upon your deference you will be the last to dispute, give testimony of Me, your true Teacher, in whose School you are to learn divine wisdom, under whose yoke you are to find rest to your souls, and beneath whose banner you are to go forth into the world conquering and to conquer.”

The practical question then, is: What amount of help can the private study of the Bible give

\* St. John, v. 39.

you towards this end, and on what terms will that help be supplied?

It has been already shown that the Bible of itself will not fully and finally *teach* you your religion. It will discharge towards you the office of the pedagogue in ancient times, who led the youths to the door of their school, and then gave them over into the hands of their master. It will do for you what St. Andrew did for St. Peter,\* and what he and St. Philip together did, at another time, for certain Gentile inquirers;† “bring you to Jesus,” and leave you under His sovereign guidance. It will furnish you with the materials of judgment, and God will help you to the right conclusion. Private judgment will bring you to the Church, and then the Church will relieve you from the burden of using it again to discover the truth. As a mere historical record, the Bible announces to you facts of the most transcendent importance. The more diligently you study it, the greater light will it throw upon your course; being in very truth, if used by you in good faith, “a lamp to the feet, and a light to the paths.”‡ It may, by God’s mercy, guide you to the just inferences from the facts it records, and give you at least a rough and vague idea of the religion which Christ has established. These were the very ends which the old Scriptures served in pointing out Christ to the Jews, and even to Gentiles, who, like the Ethiopian convert of Philip, had access to them. They did not fully represent Him as He was; still less did they supersede Him in His capacity as a final and authoritative Teacher and Guide; but they inti-

\* St. John, i. 42.

† Ib. xii. 22.

‡ Ps. cxviii. (P. V. cxix.) 105.

mated to the rightly disposed what He was to be, and thus furnished a clue whereby to find Him when He came. In the most interesting narrative of the conversion of Queen Candace's Ethiopian servant, you have a case precisely in point. That pious Gentile, who participated to a certain extent in Jewish privileges, had learned from the study of the Prophecies of Isaias, enough to qualify him for Philip the deacon's catechetical teaching; the effect of which was, that he submitted to the Church, and entered its pale through the Sacrament of Baptism.\*

But in order to these ends, it must be plain on all hands that the Bible must be read, not any how, but with certain dispositions, and in a certain way. First, of course, it must be studied with a candid, if not a reverential eye. If it be not an inspired oracle, it is at the least a venerable and veracious record. But if you go on to regard it as inspired, then, more than candour will be requisite. You will then fear to approach so sacred a depository without holy dispositions, and prayer for Divine light. This is infinitely better. Better still, if you discipline yourselves for the study of your Bible by a life of purity and self-denial; for among the things which *are* clear in it, is, a special promise of illumination to purity of spirit, and consistency of practice.† And to these internal qualifications must evidently be added others which affect the subject on which you are employed. First, the Bible must be looked at *as a whole*. Its several parts must be compared, and (as far as mere personal study will enable) adjusted and harmonized.

\* Acts, viii. 38.

† St. Matt. v. 8, xi. 25; St. John, vii. 17, &c.

This condition is palpably disregarded in the very school which most loudly insists upon it. Persons are strenuous in contending for the "whole Bible," who yet in practice mutilate and tamper with it; setting the Epistles above the Gospels, or one Epistle above another, and even ignoring, and almost insulting, whole books of their own received canon; such as the Song of Solomon. And in another way, too, they contradict their own received maxim. For, while stipulating, not merely for the "whole Bible," but for the "Bible only," they really do adulterate the pure Scriptures (like the Jews of our Lord's time) by a multitude of human traditions. It is through effect of these, that special texts come to receive a most undue prominence and a most limited interpretation, to the exclusion or disparagement of others which equally challenge a position, and cry out for an explanation. So that, in matter of fact, whilst vehemently denouncing the Catholic Church for imposing, as they say, upon Scripture her own sense, they do, in fact, themselves fetter that liberty of judgment which they profess to respect, by constructions for which they can give no better reason than their own arbitrary will.

To what religious point an investigation of Scripture, so conducted, would be likely, my non-Catholic hearers, to lead you, is a matter which I am not in a position to assume; nor, in the present stage of the argument, even to predict. But I think I hear you say, as with one voice, that at any rate the Catholic Church is not likely to be the goal of your prescribed course. There has just been laid down for your guidance in the study of the Scriptures, a method of inquiry which, divested of all circumlocution, reduces

itself to something very like the great Protestant rule: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." And it is especially, as we all know, *against* the Catholic religion that this rule is framed and directed. It is commonly supposed that nothing more is wanted for the annihilation of "Popery" than an unprejudiced study of the Bible in its simplicity and in its integrity; and the Catholic Church is thought herself to concede this inference, without dispute, by the very fact of stinting, as it is said, the use of the Scriptures, or at any rate, providing extrinsic help, in the case of her own children, towards the right understanding of them. But, in the first place, it is as great a mistake as can well be made to conclude that, because the Catholic Church regulates the use of the Holy Scriptures in the case of her own members, she means thereby to imply, either that their testimony is against herself, or that she is opposed to their being read as freely and independently as may be by those who reject her authority, with the honest purpose of discovering to what quarter of the religious horizon they point. The reason why the Church objects to the indiscriminate and independent reading of the Bible by Catholics, is, that it is contrary to her first principle as a *teaching* Church, to submit her doctrines to the private judgment of her members. For this would be just as if a parent, or a sovereign, were to forbear from asking children, or subjects, for their obedience, till such time as each of them had first fully satisfied himself that the instructions, or the laws, to which he was called upon to defer, could be vindicated and substantiated to his own entire satisfaction.

But as to you, my non-Catholic hearers, we

cannot hinder your reading the Bible if we would, and would not if we could. You will not admit our right to guide you; nor, again, do you live under religious systems which advance a claim, like our own, to authority over your faith and conscience. And, since you must, and will, use your liberty of judgment without us, our only desire is that you should use it well, and, at least, in accordance with your own acknowledged principles.

Again; however generally it may be thought, that the great "preservative against Popery" is to be found in "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible," there are unquestionable facts abroad, which speak in just the opposite direction. It is absolutely certain that there are many persons, actually members of the Catholic Church at this moment, who have been brought into her communion by no single human cause so much as by the study of the Bible in the true spirit (though not according to the popular construction) of the great Protestant rule. They discovered, at a certain period of their lives, that they had indeed read the Bible, but not the "whole Bible;" that they had too much neglected, for instance, the teaching of our Saviour in the Gospels, or dwelt on particular Epistles, or parts of the Epistles, to the exclusion of the rest; or they found, again, that, while they had been careful to eschew Catholic or patristic interpretations, or traditions, they had allowed themselves to be unduly swayed by others of shorter standing, less extensive reception, and less venerable claim.

What has happened once, may happen again. At any rate, it is my intention to show you, in this series of Discourses, that the Scriptural evi-



dence for the Catholic religion is not quite so contemptible as you may have been accustomed to suppose. Let me, however, set before you as clearly as I may, what is the precise scope of the following argument, and what are its limits.

First (and this cannot be too often repeated), it is not proposed to show that the Bible contains the Catholic religion in a systematic form. 2. Nor, that its testimony to all Catholic doctrines is as clear as its testimony to some of them. 3. Nor, that it testifies to any particular doctrine (any more than to the whole body of doctrine) in the fulness and explicitness with which such doctrine is exhibited in a dogmatic form by the Catholic Church (unless, indeed, it be in the case of the great principle of authoritative teaching through the instrumentality of an organized body, which is the very root of the whole matter). 4. Nor, that the Bible exhibits what may be called the devotional and practical *inferences* of certain doctrines. 5. Nor, that it may not contain *apparent* contradictions of certain Catholic doctrines, or fail expressly to recognize certain Catholic practices. The latter four of these propositions amount to little more than a drawing out of the first of them, which states, in other words, that the Bible does not answer the ends of a formulary, or supply the place of a teacher.

But my argument will so far fail of its intended object, if it do not prove, 1st, that the Bible does actually testify, in its obvious meaning, to some doctrines which are *characteristic* of the Catholic religion, so as to be found in no other. 2nd. That, on the other hand, there is no truth prominent in the Bible, to which the Catholic Church, on her side, does not bear at least equally conspicu-

ous testimony. 3rd. That with regard to doctrines of the Catholic Church to which the Scripture testimony is less constraining, the Bible obviously *implies*, what the Catholic Church alone exhibits in the form of dogmatic teaching. 4th. That the Bible contains, not merely the *foundation* of every dogma of the Catholic religion, but (what is more) that peculiar *idea* of religion on the whole, which the Catholic Church alone realizes and represents in practice. 5th. That the Bible does not, on the one hand, hide under its surface *any* doctrine of the Catholic Church to anything like the same extent as, on the other, it proclaims as well as uniformly implies, the Apostolic origin of that great Catholic polity, with its regular organization, its dictatorial authority, and its one supreme Head, which, once granted, becomes the warrant to the world at large for *all* which the Catholic Church propounds in the way of dogma, or imposes in the way of obligation.

The very primary condition of success, I do not say in proving these points, but in clearing the way for the consideration of them, is, that the discussion should be approached, as far as possible, and on both sides equally, with as much of freedom from personal bias as it is in the power of the will to command. It will be for you, my non-Catholic hearers, to enter into the field of inquiry in which I am proposing to join you, with minds divested to the utmost of those prejudices against us and our religion, which you may have derived from *any* external quarter, whether it be the system in which you may have been educated, the society in which you may have lived, or the atmosphere which, as Englishmen, you have always breathed. And it will be my duty, on the

other hand, to endeavour to the best of my ability, to view the question apart from the prepossessions of my faith; to keep myself in arrear, rather than to go in advance, of your probable convictions; to assume nothing which you ought not, in all fairness, to grant; and to quit no proof till I have anticipated all reasonable objections to it. Shall I add, as some claim to your forbearance, that, although by the grace of God a Catholic, I was once an inquirer like yourselves; so that, it is not hard for me to put myself in your position, imagine your feelings, and appreciate your difficulties? It is true, indeed, that such attempts, on either side, can be at best but approximations to the desired object. For we are creatures of habit and association, who drink in prejudices or prepossessions with the very air we breathe, and can live but a very brief space of time, and even then with extreme difficulty and discomfort, in an "exhausted receiver." At least, however, the very nature of our argument requires us to make the trial; for it is an argument of the class called "*ad homines*," in which the greatest solecism a reasoner could commit would be that of presuming his hearers other men than they are: while the duty on their side of divesting the mind of all prejudice, is but the natural result of a sincere desire to arrive at the truth.

And now, my own dear Catholic brethren and children, who, for a series of Sundays, are to be defrauded of that full measure and quality of spiritual food which you have a right to expect at our hands, permit me to address to you also a few words of parting apology and explanation.

Could I regard the proposed subject of these Discourses as one of mere controversy, nothing,

I believe, would have induced me to make the church, at least at an ordinary Sunday office, the place for conducting it. Ill indeed would the harsh and grating tones of a mere polemical discussion have harmonized with those sweet and jubilant chants in which we have just been sounding the praises of our God; worse still, with that Mystery of love whereof we are just about to contemplate the manifestation, and to taste the fruits, in the Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament!

But our subject, though immediately addressed to strangers, may not, as I trust, be without its profit to you also. However it may fail in its direct object, it will, at any rate, be the occasion of exhibiting to you a considerable portion of the Sacred Scriptures, whose words, as I know, are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb to your spiritual taste. And, though the subject be argumentative, and, in a certain sense, controversial, it will yet be my duty, for your sakes at least, to set it forth in as interesting and even devotional a shape as its nature will allow, and my power enable. And, in fine, should any of you ever have heard from others, and perhaps been half tempted to suspect for yourselves, that the Catholic Church is fearful, or shy, of bringing her doctrines, practices, and institutions, up to the light of God's written Word, lest haply her works should be reproved,\* these Discourses will, at any rate, to the extent of their own testimony, furnish you with an answer to such charge, or a satisfaction of such misgiving.

\* St. John, iii. 20.



## DISCOURSE II.

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

THE object of our proposed argument may be made good either by illustrating the Catholic Church from the Bible, or the Bible from the Catholic Church. Positive doctrine, however, being (at least in our judgment) on the side, not of the Bible, but of the Church, the former of these two methods, which makes the "scripturalness" of the Catholic Church the case to be made out, and the Bible the witness to be cited, is that which we shall generally find reason to adopt in preference to the latter, which starts with the Bible and brings the doctrine of the Church to bear upon it. But in the present Discourse the latter method will be followed; and the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church produced in illustration of a "Bible truth." That such truths there are, impressed upon the surface of the Scriptures with manifest clearness, was asserted in the outset; and one of our undertakings was to show that "there is no truth prominent in the Bible to which the Catholic Church does not on her side bear conspicuous testimony." An opportunity of redeeming this pledge in the case of a doctrine which has the most overwhelming Scripture evidence on its side occurs at the very beginning of our inquiry. The doctrine to which I refer, and which claims on every account pre-

cedence of all other subjects, is that which is denoted by the term, "the Cross of Christ."

What the precise nature of the doctrine so expressed may be, is a matter upon which there is a difference of opinion. But that *some* doctrine, intended by this phrase, was an essential article of Apostolic preaching, we shall all alike be forward to admit. And the question for our present consideration is, whether a doctrine answering to this description is so distinctly proclaimed and insisted upon by the Catholic Church, as to leave no doubt whatever that, in this instance at least, that Church supports and verifies her claim to be accounted the herald of the Gospel message, and the representative of the Christian dispensation; in other words, the true and actual "Church of the Bible?" I own, my non-Catholic hearers, that I shall be much disappointed, if, after fairly reviewing the facts which bear upon this question, you should hesitate to admit, at the very least, that the Catholic and Evangelical exhibitions of the doctrine of the Cross of Christ are both coincident in prominence and identical in character.

Before proceeding, however, to consider in what way, or under what form, the Catholic Church sets this great truth before her children, and before the world, it will be necessary for us to master, as far as possible, the Scriptural idea of it; and to this end, I shall quote at length the principal passages of St. Paul's Epistles, in which direct mention is made of the Cross of Christ:—"Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not in wisdom of speech, lest the Cross of Christ should be made void: For the word of the Cross to them indeed that perish, is foolish-

ness: but to them that are saved, that is to us, it is the power of God.”\* Again: “And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the scandal of the Cross ceased.”† Further on: “For as many as desire to please in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer the persecution of the Cross of Christ.”‡ “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.”§ “He is our peace who hath made both one . . . that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the Cross, killing the enmities in Himself.”|| “For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ.”¶ To these I will add a very remarkable passage from the Epistle to the Galatians, which obviously alludes to the same subject. “O senseless Galatians,” says St. Paul, “who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, *before whose eyes* Jesus Christ hath been set forth, *crucified among you*?”\*\*

Put yourselves now in the position of a person approaching the study of the Bible, on the one hand, with education and intelligence enough to form a fair notion of its meaning; on the other, without bias in favour of any particular school of religious teaching; and follow me while I describe, *seriatim*, what impressions such a reader would, as I think, be apt to receive from the passages just quoted. In the first place, he could not doubt that the verity expressed by the phrase, “Cross

\* 1 Cor. i. 17.

† Gal. v. 11.

‡ Ib. vi. 12.

§ Ib. v. 14.

|| Eph. ii. 14, 16.

¶ Phil. iii. 18.

\*\* Gal. iii. 1.



of Christ," must be one of the most primary importance in the religion of the Gospel. A second glance at the passages would further convince him, that such verity must not merely be of supreme importance, but *characteristic* of the Gospel; its grand point of difference from Heathenism, Judaism, and Mahometanism, on the one hand, and from all counterfeits of itself on the other. A further survey of the texts would lead him (would it not?) to pronounce, that the Cross of Christ is more than even characteristic of the Gospel; in short, that it is a kind of epitome of it; an abbreviated mode of expressing all that is contained under the Gospel idea. And something more still: namely, that it is a highly figurative, expressive, and, as we may say, pictorial, mode of epitomizing the Gospel; in other words, that the Cross of Christ is the *symbol* of the Gospel; bearing to it the same kind of relation which a word bears to the idea it denotes,—a picture or statue to its original; so that the bare recital of the term is calculated to inflame the imagination, and fill the mind, of a Christian with all that is contained under the thought of his profession; that is, of course, as far as that thought admits of being analyzed, or the human mind is capable of grasping its import. This mode of teaching by figures, as every one knows, is very distinctive of the sacred Scriptures. The discourses of our Blessed Lord furnish numerous instances of it; not merely when it is drawn out into the form of a parable, or regular narrative, but where it is interwoven with the substance of general teaching. Such expressions as, "I am the Door:" "I am the true Vine:" "I am the Good Shepherd:" "I am the Light of the

World," will at once occur to the mind in illustration. This method of teaching by images has great advantages over more prosaic modes of instruction; among which may be mentioned, that it saves a great amount of time; attaining the end in view far more expeditiously, as well as far more effectually, than laboured description, or oratorical paraphrase. The imagination is a most important ally where we desire to impress truth, or arouse to action, as is abundantly proved by the practice of the world. If a clever writer desire to express summarily on his title-page the subject of a work intended to compare Christianity with Mahometanism, he calls it "The Cross and the Crescent;" and thus not merely embodies its leading idea, but embodies it in a striking and animated form. When an English general, with war or invasion in prospect, would excite the courage of his troops, he does not tire their patience, or dissipate their enthusiasm, by a lengthened harangue on the dangers of the emergency, or the comparative resources of the contending parties, but contents himself with telling them to "fight for their hearths and homes;" or, "to rally round the British Lion." When the French commander reminds his soldiers, weary of a protracted siege, that they must not rest till they have seen the "Eagle of France soar proudly above the citadel," he manifestly suggests an image to feed upon and to be remembered, when spirits flag and arguments are forgotten.

Now, then, we are ready for our final conclusion. The metaphors of literature become the pictures and images of practical life. And this the world knows also; far better, my non-Catholic hearers, than your own spiritual guides. Does

the statesman who would inculcate such sentiments as patriotism or loyalty, content himself with striking metaphors, still less with eloquent exhortations? No; he embodies the national emblem in a graphic, or glyptic form, that so it may speak eloquently to your corporal, as well as to your mental, eye. Its ennobling and exciting image accosts you at every turn, and especially there where its lessons are most needed by you, or most likely to prove effectual. It surmounts the staff of the standard, or floats upon its drapery; nay, it meets you in your walks, or mingles itself with your recreations, or accommodates itself to your tastes. It is the cynosure of all eyes in the public exhibition; it is the sign of the tavern; it is the burden of the popular ballad. Go where you will, it encounters and confronts you. It gives no rest to your imagination, and no quarter to your indolence.

Or how, again, could loyalty be sustained, even for a day, without a similar apparatus of popular incentives? Your sovereign lives, for the most part, out of sight; and, "out of sight," says the proverb, "out of mind." Hence her image must be impressed on the current coin of the realm, and sent to and fro in the interchange of epistolary correspondence. The arts of painting, statuary, and engraving, are taxed in familiarizing her to the public eye, while music lends its powerful aid to enshrine her in the popular affections.

But when poor Christianity comes into play, all this wisdom is paralyzed, and all these expedients are counted a sin! The national prejudice refuses to your devotion an image of your crucified Redeemer, though you might erect in your churches, without molestation and even with

applause, the insignia of the royal authority. You may perpetuate the memory of heroes or statesmen by statues to their honour, but you must not place in a church the sculptured figure of one of your heavenly patrons, as you would avoid a legal prosecution or a popular tumult. You are permitted and even encouraged, as loving and dutiful children, to clasp to your bosom and bury in your embrace, the likeness of your earthly parent; but to do this with the picture of your Redeemer's and your own heavenly Mother, would be to derogate from His honour, and incur peril of idolatry. What! Are we then so much more prone to idolize the things of heaven than those of earth, that the same mode of manifesting love is safe in the one case, and dangerous in the other? Is it because the interests of religion are less important, her influences naturally stronger, and her service easier, that we may dispense in the concerns of the soul with those helps, without which we cannot carry on the affairs of the world even for a single day? Such is not the conclusion of the Catholic Church, any more than it is the language of the Bible.

An expressive Church is the proper representative of an historical religion, and the proper exponent of metaphorical Scriptures. And of all objects which the Church Catholic presents to the eye, the most conspicuous and familiar is that in which she embodies the great mystery of the Cross of Christ. For the form in which to clothe this precious truth she has not far to look. What is the verity of the Cross of Christ, the great topic of apostolical preaching, but that harrowing yet consoling "sight,"\* of which Scripture has re-

\* St. Luke, xxiii. 48.

corded every lineament ; the image of our Divine Lord nailed to the transverse beam of wood which expressed to Jew and heathen alike, the very climax of all that was ignominious ?

Surely, there is no conceivable method of erecting the doctrine of Christ crucified into a standing argument, and making our wounded and dying Lord a perpetual monitor, which can be compared in efficacy with the visible sign of the Cross, and the tangible image of the Crucified ! The Christian who cannot have his human adviser, or his favourite preacher, always at his side, can carry his crucifix on his breast ; that most eloquent of preachers, and truest of all friends in need. And even without his crucifix, he may form on his person that holy sign which (apart from its sacramental power) is the most expressive memento of its subject. At least, if he fail to do so, his negligence cannot be imputed to the Catholic Church. She both supplies the defect of our practice, and offers to us, in her manifold use of the most holy sign, a protection against self-confidence, and an escape from singularity. In truth, she carries out to the letter, under the New Dispensation, that divine injunction of the Old, "These words shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thy hands ; and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes ; and thou shalt write them on thy entry, and on the doors of thy house."\* Substitute for "the words" of the Elder Dispensation, the eternal Word of the New, and you have, in the Catholic practice relative to the Cross

\* Deut. vi. 6—9.

and the Crucifix, a literal observance of this divine precept.

Let us now see what pains the Catholic Church takes to impress the doctrine of Christ crucified upon the minds of her faithful children, according to this her idea of the most effectual mode of familiarizing them with it; and then we will go on to obviate the notion that, while the Church thus habitually brings the Cross of Christ before the eye, she neglects to teach it in spirit, and with power.

The sign of the Cross distinguishes our churches in their exterior appearance, and continually meets the eye in their internal arrangements. Crosses surmount all our altars, and are worked upon our priestly vestments. Catholics form the sign of the Cross upon their persons each time they come into a church, begin and end their meals, or enter upon any serious or important work, whether sacred or secular. With this sign does the priest, again and again, mark the infant or adult in the administration of holy baptism: with this does the bishop in the sacrament of confirmation fortify the youthful soldier of Christ about to enter upon his great and perilous campaign: with this does bishop or priest impart his benediction. Each act of blessing in the Holy Mass is performed by means of the sign of the Cross; and with the same memorial of the Passion of our Lord does the priest communicate the faithful in the Holy Eucharist. It is in the form of the Cross that he absolves the penitent, and anoints the sick. This blessed and most efficacious sign the Church instructs us to love with tenderest affection, and to treat with supremest honour; guarding, as much as possible, against any even unintentional dis-

respect towards it.\* No wonder then that heretics have proposed the material Cross as a test of the faith, and Catholics found in it an occasion of martyrdom.

But the Catholic Church has many ways of "preaching the Cross," besides enjoining the customary use of its sign. First, there is the crucifix, which not only, like the bare cross, brings to mind the great mystery of redemption, but places its fact and circumstances prominently and constantly before the eye. The drooping head, the outstretched arms, the gushing wounds, all so eloquent of sin's penalty, and love's expiation, are thus indelibly impressed on the thoughts of every Christian, from the earliest moment at which he is capable of forming any idea at all; and the image remains with him to his dying hour. In those last moments it is his very present help in trouble, and the sign which scares and disperses his spiritual enemies. Before preparing him for his passage through the valley of death, the priest presents the crucifix to his lips; and to kiss it in the transport of reverent affection, is in itself an act of most salutary love. And when the soul has passed away to God, the crucifix is laid on the breast, as a visible pledge to all, that, when worms shall have destroyed that body, yet in the flesh the Christian shall see his God.

What, again, according to our doctrine, is Holy Mass—that great act of worship, alone worthy of God, which the Church makes binding upon her children at stated times under pain of sin, and which draws the worthier of them to itself by its own magnetic power—but the daily com-

\* Thus in rubrical books it is forbidden to introduce the Cross on pavements or carpets.

memoration, representation, and application of the sacrifice of the Cross of Christ? What is the blessed Eucharist, but that greatest of all sacraments, in which Christ, not content with bestowing upon sinners the gift of His grace, causes them to become true partakers even of His own Body broken, and Blood outpoured, together with the Soul and Divinity which make up His whole Incarnate Self? Hence, while the Blessed Sacrament is imparted to the faithful with the sign of the Cross, it is presented to them before communicating, as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

I wish you particularly to consider these facts of the Catholic Church as bearing upon the last of the Scripture passages which I quoted in order at the beginning: "Jesus Christ," says St. Paul to the Galatians, "has been set forth" *before your eyes*.\* In the Protestant version it runs, "evidently set forth," which makes the passage still more emphatic. And a Protestant commentator observes upon the expression: "The word rendered 'set forth' was used to denote *things written on tablets and hung up to public view*."† Do you really think that *preaching*, however eloquent and impressive, can possibly satisfy the natural import of this most remarkable phrase? Nay, does not even a heathen poet supply you with the vindication of the Church's method of teaching the doctrine of the Cross, where he says, in praise of actual, as compared with verbal, representation,—

"The ear doth slowly to the mind supply  
Those truths which flash like lightning through the  
eye."‡

\* προεγράφη. † Dr. Macknight. ‡ Horace, Art of Poetry.




If we now follow the Church, from her standing arrangements, to the forms in which her mind and spirit are cast in the language and ceremonies of religion, we find the same prominence, or rather predominance, everywhere given to the Cross of Christ. To show this from the liturgy of the Holy Mass, would be simply to transcribe the missal from end to end; every prayer of it being offered to God through Christ, that is, in virtue of His all-efficacious Cross and Passion. Every Litany, again, whatsoever its main subject, begins with an invocation of the Most Holy Trinity, and ends with an address to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." One of these popular acts of supplication is a continuous prayer to Jesus. The Most Holy Name, in which, as in a jewelled reliquary, are enshrined the treasures of redeeming love; the Prayer which our Divine Lord addressed to His Eternal Father in His agony; the instruments of the Passion; the winding-sheet in which His crucified Body was enfolded: are all the subjects of distinct commemorative festivals. Two mysteries of our faith only have festivals assigned them twice in the year. One is, the Compassion of Mary (which is a special link of union with the Passion of Jesus), the other is, His Most Precious Blood. The Passion is practically realized every week in the Friday abstinence; to which, by the general law of the Church (relaxed in England), is added a similar commemoration of Saturday, the season of our Lord's entombment.

But it is at the anniversary time of the Passion, that the Catholic Church most strikingly manifests her power of preaching the Cross of Christ. The great day is approached through a long

period of mortification and prayer; and when it draws nearer into sight, our loving mother puts off her beautiful garments, and goes into her weeds, as bereft of her Only Begotten One. And when the Great Holy Week arrives, she draws upon her deep resources of sacred dramatic power and tenderest pathos, in order to work this ineffably gracious truth into the very fibres of the Christian heart. At length, on the day itself, she wears an aspect of almost bewildered grief, maiming her customary rites, and even interrupting her daily sacrifice, that she, the very handmaid and ambassadress, may herself become a suppliant at the foot of the Cross, and leave Gethsemane and Calvary to tell their own tale.

Following the Church from her public offices of worship to her tributary stores of popular devotion, we find her, everywhere alike, the same faithful witness of the Cross. She it is who, with dutiful care, gathers up the multitudinous relics of the holy Wood; preserving them with appropriate honour, and using them to excite the love of Jesus crucified. She, again, has consecrated not merely the doctrine of the Cross, but the history of the material Instrument of the Passion, in the kindred festivals of the Finding and Exaltation. In other days, she used to speed the pilgrim on his way to the Holy Sanctuaries with her apostolic benediction, and encourage the pious expedition with the most ample of the spiritual favours at her disposal. Even now, the most popular, perhaps, of all our established devotions is that by which the faithful trace the Way of the Cross; personating in imagination, and as far as possible in act, the very followers of their suffering Redeemer, and, at each Station of the journey,



feeding their eyes with the contemplation of some chief incident of the Passion, and their hearts with the remembrance of its sweet penitential lessons. The most numerous Confraternity in England\* is that which has no object but to propagate the adoring love of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Another pious and world-wide sodality is instituted in honour of the Divine Heart of Jesus, wounded for sin; and this devotion, like the last, is sanctioned by the appointment of a special festival. Then there are the Five Wounds of Christ, likewise the subject, or rather objects, of a devotion of their own. The Seven Last Words from the Cross have, each of them, given matter of meditative instruction which, if collected, would fill volumes. Again, there are the Five Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, which are nothing more than Scripture facts connected with the Passion of our Lord, brought together into a form in which they may conveniently serve the uses of pious meditation in union with vocal prayer. And among the many religious communities in this country which, in different ways, but chiefly by the example of a self-denying life, are bearing constant witness to the doctrine of the Cross, you have one especially chartered for the preaching of the Passion, and another gathered out of the world under the invocation of "Our Most Holy Redeemer." To conclude this imperfect enumeration, let me present you with the translation of a prayer, commonly used by priests in their thanksgiving after Mass, and recommended by many special tokens of the Church's approval. "I beseech Thee,

\* Established at the London Oratory of St. Philip Neri.

sweetest Lord Jesus Christ, that Thy Passion may be the virtue by which I may be fortified, protected, and defended; Thy Wounds, the food by which I may be fed, inebriated, and delighted; that the sprinkling of Thy Blood may be the expiation of all my sins; and Thy Death, mine eternal glory; so that in all these I may find refreshment, joy, health, and true sweetness of heart. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever."

I know not, my non-Catholic hearers, in what light these devotional provisions of the Catholic Church may appear to you; but I think you can scarcely hesitate to admit, that they exhibit anything rather than indifference to the doctrine of the Cross. You may reply, indeed, that they are minute in detail, or materializing in tendency; objections which I anticipate, and shall proceed to meet by showing that the Cross of Christ enters as fully into the oral teaching and spiritual life of the Catholic Church as into her devotional practices and institutions. But if you apply to divine subjects the same tests by which you are accustomed to ascertain the depth and sincerity of human affection, you can scarcely refuse to admit that, at any rate, this resolution of the subject of the Cross into all its component parts; this microscopic analysis, as it were, of its every lineament, displays a marvellous desire of getting full hold of it, and obviating that peculiar kind of deceitfulness which a common proverb attributes to all merely general statements and descriptions.

However, it is unhesitatingly granted you, that if, while the Catholic Church lays all this stress upon devotion to the Cross, she taught any

doctrine really inconsistent with the efficacy of Christ's Atonement, or overlooked the great practical lessons which the doctrine of Christ crucified is fitted to suggest to individual Christians, she would still forfeit her claim to be accounted a faithful witness to the Cross, in the Scriptural sense of such a term. Yet I will not admit that, even as regards the attestation of the Cross of Christ as a cardinal doctrine, and a rule of interior life, the portion of the argument which has just been concluded is without its importance. For what is the answer which you will instinctively make to all I can say about the Cross of Christ entering into every part of Catholic theology? It is this. The Catholic Church, you will urge, is to be judged, not by her abstract statements, but by her popular exhibition. It is then of extreme importance to my point to show what pains the Catholic Church takes to incorporate the doctrine of the Cross into every part of what is popularly, but somewhat too technically, called her "practical system." Devotion is theology in its actual God-ward expression. This truth is well understood by you, when you would turn it to our disadvantage. Apply the rule then to all cases. In the crowds which gather around the image of the Blessed Virgin you observe, and rightly, an infallible evidence of the love which Catholics bear to the Mother of God and their own Mother. Give us the benefit of the same process of argument, or suggestion of instinct, when our Lord Himself comes into question. If you find that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass enters with incomparably greater intimacy into the body of Catholic devotion than any service of our Lady; or, when you see the palpable contrast

between a Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and any office of devotion even to the Mother of God herself, it is but the natural sequence of your own reasoning to conclude, that our Lord occupies a place in the regards of a Catholic, not merely higher in degree, but other in kind, than that which is claimed even by His Mother; *à fortiori*, therefore, than that which belongs to any of His Saints.

To give you any idea of the extent to which the doctrine of Christ crucified permeates, leavens, and modifies, every part of the theology of the Catholic Church, would require the compass of a library, rather than of a single lecture. No conceivable explicitness on the part of a teacher can supersede the necessity of trust in his hearers. They must take something, after all, for granted upon his mere word. Indeed, it is the absolute impossibility of more than glancing at this part of my subject, which almost tempts me to throw myself simply upon your confidence in respect of it, and to endeavour merely, in the treatment of other controverted matters less formidable in their magnitude, to establish a title to the reliance which I must so largely draw upon in this. Yet, as I have undertaken the work of showing that the Catholic Church gives to the Cross of Christ its proper Scriptural prominence, I must at least do what is practicable under this particular topic, and furnish you with a sample of the manner in which the meritorious Death and Passion of our Lord lie at the root of all our teaching on the subject of man's salvation. And this I purpose to do by setting before you certain portions of the authorized Catholic doctrine on the great subject of Justification, taken from the Decrees of the

Council of Trent; an authority upon which Catholics and Protestants will be equally well disposed to stake the issue of the controversy.

"Whereby it came to pass that our heavenly Father, the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, after declaring and promising Christ Jesus His Son, both before the Law, and at the time of the Law, to many of the holy patriarchs, when that blessed fulness of time was come, sent Him to men, both to redeem the Jews who were under the Law, and in order that the Gentiles, who followed not righteousness,\* might embrace † righteousness, and all receive the adoption of sons. Him did God set forth as the propitiation by faith in His Blood for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."

Further on. "Justification is a translation from that state in which man is born as a son of the first Adam into the state of grace and adoption of the sons of God by the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Again, "Of man's justification the causes are as follow: the final cause is the glory of God, and of Christ, and life eternal; the efficient, a merciful God who freely washes away sin, † and sanctifies by the seal and unction of the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance; the meritorious cause is God's Only-Begotten and most dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were enemies, of His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, merited justification for us by His most holy Passion on

\* As I am engaged in an argument *ad hominem*, I have used this Protestant term in preference to the Catholic and more appropriate and expressive one, "justice."

† Apprehenderent.

‡ Gratuito abluit.

the wood of the Cross, and made satisfaction for us to God the Father."

Lastly, speaking of merit, the Council says: "Thus neither our own justice (or righteousness) is to be defined as if it came properly from ourselves; neither is the justice of God to be lost sight of, or put on one side; since what is termed our justice (inasmuch as we are justified by it, inhering in us), that same is God's, since by God it is infused into us through the merit of Christ."\*

Observe, I am not quoting these passages controversially on the subject of Justification; but merely citing them in order to prove that the Catholic Church, at every step of her doctrinal definitions on the subject of human salvation, recognizes, distinctly and expressly, the Cross of Christ as the efficacious cause of redemption and the original fountain of merit. Indeed, the Tridentine decrees on Justification are little more than a collection of Scripture texts embodied in an authoritative form, as you may observe if you have access to the volume in which these decrees are contained, by noting how the foot of every page is studded with references to the Bible.

But it is from the lives of the blessed saints that we can best judge of the success which has attended the preaching of the Cross in the Catholic Church. The saints without exception have been penetrated to the quick by the deepest and tenderest devotion to the Passion of Christ; and of the whole number, none more conspicuously than those who, like St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, and St. Alphonso Liguori, are chiefly known to the world at large as the most devout clients of the

\* Con. Trid. Decreta. Sess. vi. De Justificatione.



Blessed Virgin. Yet more to our present point even than the hours which the saints were accustomed to spend in the contemplation of their crucified Saviour, is the simple and natural way in which we read of their turning to the crucifix as their most precious of consolations and their best of books. Thus we are told of St. Francis of Sales, that, when asked for an alms, he would look at his crucifix, and exclaim, "How can I refuse anything to a God who reduced Himself to this condition for the love of me!" When St. Laurence Justinian was in his last illness, the attendants prepared a soft bed for him, at which he was troubled, and said, "Are you laying a soft bed for me? Not so; this must not be done. My Lord was stretched on a hard and painful tree." St. Thomas Aquinas, coming one day to visit St. Bonaventure, asked him in what book he had studied his theology. St. Bonaventure, pointing to his crucifix, said, "There is the source of all my best knowledge. I study Jesus Christ alone and Him crucified." Each of the saints of the Church might truly say, after St. Paul, "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross, and I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."\* But there is one especially who was himself a living image of the Passion of Jesus Christ rather than his life merely a memorial of it. In him (among others) was realized that great miracle which many divines consider that St. Paul commemorates in his own instance when he writes, "I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body.† It is matter of historical certainty, to which the Catholic Church has given substance and expression in one of her festivals,‡

\* Gal. ii. 19, 20.

† Ib. vi. 17.

‡ The Stigmata of St. Francis, Sept. 17.

that St. Francis of Assisi received as a favour, which had especial reference to his extraordinary and most practical love of the sufferings of Jesus, the impression of five wounds, corresponding to those caused by the nails on the Cross; and his biographer, after recording this great privilege, goes on to say: "It appears manifest that this wonderful favour was in part a recompense of the great love which St. Francis bore to the Cross of Christ. From the beginning of his conversion his heart was so inflamed with this divine love that the sufferings of his Saviour almost continually filled his thoughts, in which meditation, sighs, and tears, frequently expressed the sentiments of his soul." And this was no mere occasional rapture, or luxury of devotion, but a most practical principle of conduct. For to render himself more perfectly conformed to his crucified Jesus, he stripped himself of everything, made of his body a victim of penance, and thrice sought an opportunity of giving his life for Christ by martyrdom. To soothe the pains of a violent distemper he was one day desired to let some person read a book to him, but he answered, "Nothing gives me so much delight as to think on the life and passion of our Lord; I continually employ my mind on this object, and were I to live to the end of the world, I should stand in need of no other books." One day, meeting a beggar almost without clothes, he said, with sighs and tears, to his companion, "This poor man reproaches us by his poverty. We have chosen to be poor, and he outdoes us!" He called poverty his lady, his queen, his mother, and his spouse; and earnestly begged it of God as his portion and privilege. "O Jesus," he said, "invest me with this treasure\

For the glory of Thy holy name, grant that I may never possess anything, but subsist upon the charity of others, and even this in great moderation!" I extract these passages from the work of a biographer nowise remarkable for credulity, or what is called fanaticism, the Rev. Alban Butler.

To these testimonies from the living practice of saints, I will add one more from their writings. Among the various methods of honouring the Cross of Christ which the Catholic Church has introduced, the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus has always occupied a most important place. This Name, as we have once before observed, is a kind of compendium of the subject of our redemption by Christ. It means, as you are aware, Saviour; and it was given to our Lord before His birth, in token of the office He was to fulfil in the redemption of the world. Christians are therefore recommended by the Church to love and venerate this most holy "name, above all names,"\* to bow the knee in token of respect to it, to make use of it in the season of trial, and to die with it, if possible, on their lips, or at least in their hearts. It is a name, I sincerely believe, deeply loved by the more religious among Protestants; indeed I well remember the time when the use of it was a touchstone of parties in the Established Church, the more fervent constantly uttering it, and the more frigid turning this practice to their reproach, till at length it was partially rescued from obloquy and neglect by certain clergymen who were popularly charged with a leaning to the Catholic Church. Hear, then, in what glowing, and, if I may employ a much abused and calumniated word,

\* Phil. ii. 9.

in what truly *evangelical* language, a Catholic saint can speak of this Most Holy Name, and bear in mind, as I proceed, that the saint in question is one remarkable, even among other saints, for his intensely impassioned language in addressing the Blessed Virgin.

"The Name of Jesus," says St. Bernard, "is food to the heart as well as light to the eye. Is it not consolation to think of it? What so fills out the soul in meditation? What so refreshes the exhausted senses, strengthens every virtue, causes all that is good to vegetate, and fosters every chaste affection? Dry is all food of the soul except it be softened with this oil; tasteless, except it be seasoned with this salt. Thy writing has no relish for me unless I read in it Jesus. Thy words have no relish for me unless Jesus be heard among them. Jesus is honey in the mouth, music in the ear, exultation in the heart. Nay, it is medicine too. Is any sad? Let but Jesus come into his heart, and spring thence to his lips; and lo! at the rising light of that Name, all clouds are dispelled, and tranquillity returns. Does any one fall into sin? Does despair carry him into the snare of death? and will he not once more breathe and live, if he invoke that Name of Life?"\*

To conclude. The Cross of Christ, as implied in the Bible, is at once a great and impressive fact, and a most important and all-pervading doctrine. The Catholic Church makes it prominent in both of these characters. As a fact, she labours to store it in the minds, and establish it in the

\* St. Bernard, Serm. xv. on the Canticles; introduced in the church office of the Holy Name (Second Sunday after the Epiphany).

hearts, of her children, by methods strictly conformable to those employed in the world as not merely serviceable, but necessary, towards the practical inculcation of any important truth. She literally haunts them with its image; pursuing them with it from the way-side into the church, and from the church into their dwellings, and connecting it not merely with the formal exercise of their religion, but with their daily acts and pursuits. And as to the doctrine; this she implies in every part of her ritual, represents in her ceremonial, incorporates into her teaching, makes personal in her devotions. My object is less to controvert than to instruct, and therefore, omitting all hostile inferences, and foregoing all invidious comparisons, I will simply ask you, my non-Catholic hearers, whether, as honest men, you can ever again bring yourselves to charge the Catholic Church with "making void the Cross of Christ?"

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## DISCOURSE III.

## THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

THE subject we are now about to approach is one, towards the right consideration of which it is peculiarly necessary that you, my non-Catholic hearers, on your side, and I, on mine, should lay aside, for the time being, the prepossessions under which we are severally accustomed to regard it. The name of the Blessed Virgin Mary is associated in every Catholic heart with all that is elevated in sanctity, attractive in beauty, and august in privilege. The sentiment which that name evokes is one not so much of mere affection, as of chivalrous enthusiasm, such as ere now has impelled the devout servant of Mary to resent any denial of her claims, or any reflection upon her honour, with the loyalty of a champion, or the fidelity of a knight-errant. And it needs not to be said how totally unsuited is such a spirit as this, or even any portion of it, to the stern duty of the controversialist, who must approach even the most ennobling and exciting of topics in a calm and dispassionate mood, and tame his nature down from the blood-heat point of Catholic devotion to the temperate level of argumentative debate. On the other hand, I must claim of you, my hearers, to meet me half-way in this process of approximation. For it is the essential property of the subject we are about to discuss, that while

it elicits the warmest manifestations of interest on the side of Catholics, it also arouses, even more than any other controversial question, the antipathy of those who differ from us. Whenever or wherever popular prejudices are kindled against us, it is found that our doctrine on the Blessed Virgin has above any other part of our religion to sustain their brunt. It is not so very long since, in our own island, the name of the Virgin Mother of God was the signal for every species of blasphemous ribaldry, and since her image was treated with the indignities which are considered to be the appropriate expression of the nation's vengeance against the effigies of traitors and conspirators. And although such occasional outbursts of popular frenzy do not, of course, represent the average state of Protestant feeling, yet I fear that they do exhibit the natural elements of that feeling, though in a very exaggerated form; even as we may know the quarter from which the wind blows with equal accuracy, whether it be indicated by the gentlest breeze, or by the most violent hurricane. Of you, indeed, my present hearers, I hope and believe better things; nor would I willingly think that you bring with you to the consideration of this subject any deeper prepossessions than those which are the natural result of your education, or which fill the atmosphere in which you breathe. Nay, I would fain suppose even better still: that your suspicion of all attempts to rate highly the claims of the Blessed Virgin has its foundation in a commendable jealousy for the honour of her Divine Son. Be all this as it may, I will ask you, just for this one evening, to hold these prepossessions, whether stronger or weaker, in abeyance;

to come out from behind your fortifications and give me an amicable meeting upon the common ground of the Sacred Scriptures. In this proposition I am not claiming more than I am ready to concede; and, indeed, I am sure that in parting, for the time, with your habitual thoughts of our Blessed Lady, you cannot make a greater sacrifice than I, in suspending mine.

Nor, again, in proposing that you should divest yourselves of certain religious prejudices in order to give you a fair chance of mastering my argument, do I desire for one moment, that you should approach this subject with your minds in the state of a *tabula rasa*, or blank sheet, as respects other religious convictions which I am thankful to believe that, in a measure, you share with ourselves. On the contrary, I regard such convictions as of the greatest possible assistance towards my proof; and I shall lay its very foundation in the assumption of them. Were I proposing to vindicate, on Scripture grounds, the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Virgin, in argument with infidels or sceptics, or even Socinians, I should find myself under a disadvantage (I do not say insuperable, yet serious), which, in the presence of those whom I assume to be Protestants of the Established Church, or of the more right-thinking bodies of dissenters from it, I do not recognize. I shall begin, therefore, by taking the liberty of drawing out your creed for you, with the view of clearing, as well as narrowing, the ground of our conference. In doing so, I shall be compelled to act without your consent, and without giving you the opportunity of correcting me as I proceed; the greater reason, indeed, why I should be very careful not to mis-



represent your belief. However, if the theological propositions I am about to lay down do not fairly express it, they form, at any rate, the basis upon which my argument in this Discourse must be understood to proceed.

I assume, then, that those with whom I now treat, receive as Gospel truths, that Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the Only-Begotten Son of God, and that He was born in the flesh of the Virgin Mary. I suppose that, in believing our Lord to be the Only-Begotten Son of God, they believe Him also to be Himself God, of one substance with His Father, co-eternal with Him, and with the Holy Ghost, and equal to both in power, majesty, and every other Divine perfection. I am here using the language of the creeds which all members of the Established Church of England profess to receive as undoubtedly conformable with Scripture, and whose statements form, as I assume, the symbol of the belief of all Protestants in this country, excepting those who regard themselves, and would be regarded by their brethren, as holders of some peculiar and exceptional opinions.

When the Bible says of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "She brought forth her first-born Son,"\* it gives its warrant for all the honour and devotion which is paid her in the Catholic Church. Such, I cannot but feel, is the conclusion at which we should all arrive, did we consider this matter apart from the prejudices of sect or education. I mean that I think it is inconceivable, how any one who brings it home to himself that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity, God, of the substance of His

\* St. Luke, ii. 7.

Father, begotten before all creation, and therefore uncreate and co-eternal with Him; and that this same God, the only Son, our Lord, was also the true Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, should hesitate to give His Mother the rank in the Christian dispensation which the Catholic Church assigns to her; or that, allowing her this rank, he should then seriously maintain that *any* honour (short of the honour paid to God alone) is misplaced when bestowed upon her. For such a one believes nothing less than that the Most High God did truly take of her that human nature with which He was pleased to unite His own uncreated Godhead. And this being so, I think he would allow that the presumption, or *prima facie* evidence, is in favour of the Catholic doctrine; that the difficulty, I mean, to a pious person would be, to conceive how the Blessed Virgin, bearing this unspeakably intimate relation to Almighty God, could ever have participated in the corruption of our fallen nature, not that she should have been created with a miraculous exemption from its faults or defects; and so on, with respect to every other privilege with which the Catholic Church has invested this most marvellously favoured of all the creatures of God. Equally little can I understand how, if he were to review the several lights in which the Blessed Virgin Mary is regarded by the two great religious bodies which at the present moment are contending for supremacy in this country, he should pronounce *our* deportment towards the Mother of God, the wrong and unevangelical, *yours*, my Protestant hearers, the right and evangelical one. I think, on the contrary, that he would consider it to be the obvious instinct of piety towards our Blessed Lord Him-

self, to treat His Most Holy Mother with the eminent honour and the loyal love with which she meets in the Catholic Church; to store up the memory of every event which bears upon her august prerogatives; to exhaust the resources of imagination in order to frame counterparts of her beauty; and to ransack the vocabulary of love in order to find expressions answerable to her claims. And, on the other hand, that he would regard the treatment which this Blessed Mother of our Divine Lord experiences at the hands of all in this country, with the single exception of Catholics, as an outrage upon piety, and an insult to Christ, than which nothing can be conceived more monstrously unnatural; that it would seem to him almost like the ravings of insanity to maintain, that the peculiar mode of showing loyalty to Christ is to ignore the dignity, and proscribe the veneration, of the Mother from whom He took that very nature in which He redeemed us; that it is, in short, an especial token of reverence to Him, to banish from churches every representation of her beauty, from public worship, every recognition of her power; and to leave even that talismanic name, which should electrify all Christendom into a transport of love, to become the watchword of bitter controversy, or to degenerate into a mere antiquarian memento of the days in which Christians delighted to consecrate God's House under its sweet and powerful invocation.

But let us now come nearer to the sacred Scriptures, and inquire, which idea of the Blessed Virgin,—that which obtains among Catholics, or that which prevails elsewhere,—is the one that would suggest itself to an impartial observer as the more accordant with the Scripture estimate

of the Mother of God. And here I cannot but remember that the nature of my argument precludes me from a great part of the Scriptural evidence on this particular subject, which is available in speaking to Catholics. Of this more indirect evidence, indeed, I shall make incidental use in the sequel; but, for the present, we must confine ourselves to that which stands out in clear relief on the surface of the Gospel narrative. It is to St. Luke, whom sacred tradition reports to have borne an especial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that we owe that portion of the Inspired History which bears most closely upon our present purpose. Let me invite your especial attention to his account of the Annunciation.

“In the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the Virgin’s name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering said to her: The Holy

Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the Angel departed from her.”\*

Let us observe, in the first place, that this angelic embassy is one of several which took place about the same time, and in relation to the same momentous subject; and let us note the points of difference, as well as of agreement, between those other celestial missions and that of which the Blessed Virgin was the object. Six months before the Angel Gabriel visited the virgin-recluse of Nazareth, he had appeared to a holy priest at Jerusalem, “standing at the right side of the altar of incense.”†. And a short time afterwards, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, the betrothed of the Blessed Virgin, in his sleep, and commended to his unshaken love and confidence that pure and undefiled partner, who, in becoming the spouse of the Holy Ghost, had broken no vow of conjugal fidelity to him.‡ What a sublime idea of the importance of the message which was now ready to be communicated to man, is conveyed by this multiplicity and multiformity of celestial communications! Heaven seems, as it were, to travail with the burden of a mighty secret; and angelic minis-

\* St. Luke, i. 26-38.

† Ib. i. 11.

‡ St. Matt. i. 20.

tries await, in prostrate expectation, the mandate of the Most High which is to speed them, hither and thither, with the force of flame and the celerity of light,\* on their missions of mercy and consolation to the several elect on earth who are to take part in the marvellous work. And surely in this class, the Virgin Mother of God vindicates, even on the page of Scripture, her place of indisputable pre-eminence. There is something in the very opening words of the narrative of the great Annunciation which heralds forth its importance. "In the sixth month,"—as if the previous mission to Zacharias, recorded in the same chapter, formed but the point by which this new revelation was to be measured, the era from which it was to date; and shrank, as it were, from the dignity of its own intrinsic importance into the dimensions of a mere preliminary. Indeed, I think that we cannot by any process of examination judge better of the place given to Mary in the narrative of the Annunciation, than by comparing that narrative with the one so similar to it in character, as well as so contiguous in historical and spiritual position,—the previous account of the announcement made to Zacharias of the approaching birth of St. John the Baptist. The contrast between the two is made the more remarkable by the resemblance, almost verbal, between the manner in which the father of the Baptist and the Mother of our Lord received the announcements of which they were severally the objects. "Zachary, seeing the Angel, was troubled, and fear fell upon him." Mary, "having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should

\* Vide Ps. ciii. (P.V. civ.) 4.

be.”\* In both instances, the angel allayed these apprehensions in the same terms; but then begins a difference. The angel said to him, “Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard.” The angel said to her, “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.” To Zachary, “Thy wife Elizabeth shall conceive, and bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice in his nativity.” To Mary, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”† It is most remarkable, again, that both the priest and the Holy Virgin received these several communications with very similar expressions of diffidence. “Zachary said to the Angel: Whereby shall I know this: for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years?” Mary, in like manner, suggests a natural obstacle to the fulfilment of the Divine promise, “How shall this be done, because I know not man?” Now, then, observe the contrast between the replies of the same angel in each case. To Zachary he conveys a reproach upon his infidelity. “The Angel answering, said to him: I am Gabriel who stand before God; and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these glad tidings.” As if he had said, “You speak as one not knowing the dignity of your celestial guest, or the power of God who sends him.”

\* St. Luke, i. 29.

† Ib. i. 31, 32, 33.

Moreover, he leaves no doubt of the tenor of his words, for he then adds: "And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass, *because thou hast not believed my words*, which shall be fulfilled in their time." Ah, my brethren, what a prize would these words of the angel have been to the enemies of Mary, had they been found in Scripture as the answer to *her* interpellation! But what is the fact? Zachary's difficulty was the product of distrust; Mary's was the instinct of virgin innocence and humility. Therefore Zachary's reception of the angel's message was punished; Mary's elicited the development of her magnificent privilege on the part of her angelic visitant, and (what is yet more observable) was turned to her commendation, as if in contrast to Zachary's behaviour under parallel circumstances. "The Angel answering, said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." We thus learn that Mary's hesitation was without fault; it was but the suggestion of virginal modesty which never ruffled the steady flow of heroic faith; wherefore her cousin Elizabeth, speaking under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, pronounces her "*blessed, in that she believed.*"\* Her habitual faith, unshaken even by the marvellous announcement of the angel, broke out, at the close of his visit, in the memorable words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." The redemption of the world seemed to hang

\* St. Luke, i. 45.



upon that act of faithful submission, and "the Angel," his mission now completed, "departed from her,"\* to carry back to Heaven the tidings of his success.

The more closely you examine, and the more deeply you meditate upon, this history of the Annunciation, the more, I am satisfied, you will feel what a most exalted idea of the Blessed Virgin Mary it gives every way. If you regard it as an incident in her life, it conveys the most touching impression of her eminent sanctity and heroic fidelity to God. At the time of the Annunciation, the Blessed Virgin had not passed the years of what we may call her first girlhood. It is evident from the narrative, that she had the most sensitive apprehension of all that became the purity and modesty of her sex and of her estate, even if you will not let me assume, what, I think, appears also upon the face of the narrative, that she had already consecrated herself by some special act to the undivided service of Almighty God. To one such as this, the mission of the angel must needs have been fraught with the most mysterious and trying perplexity. Yet what modesty, joined with prudence and simplicity, reigns throughout her demeanour, and breathes in her every word! Again, it is plain that the humility of Mary was as deep as her virginal purity was illustrious. Yet observe how the sense of unworthiness, no less than the instinct of modesty, which appears in her earlier deportment, in the "trouble" caused her by the angel's commendation, and in the reluctance to believe that one like herself could be chosen for such a dig-

\* St. Luke, i. 38.

nity, yields at once, or rather bows, to that sovereign will of which she desired that it alone should reign paramount through the mediation of her unswerving obedience.

Then, look at the other side of the picture, and survey the Angel's deportment towards her. There are other records of angelic embassies in Scripture, but there is nothing the least parallel to this. In other cases God's messenger is accustomed to open his mission, like a true ambassador, by showing his credentials,\* or assuming the tone of command. But Gabriel begins with a salutation, or rather (I will say it) an act of homage. "Hail, full of grace,† the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women." Surely, my brethren, these are the words, not so much of a viceroy to a subject, as of a paranymp to a bride, or a delegate to a sovereign queen.

But it is time to pass on to the "second joyful mystery," the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin to her cousin Elizabeth. Perhaps in the whole of the sacred Scriptures there is not a more beautiful and affecting narrative than that of this memorable visit. The angel, you remember, had referred to Elizabeth's instance, in his conference with the Holy Virgin, as to a token that her own privilege, though singular, was not single. Mary, whose charity equalled her humility, had caught up the word even in the midst of her virginal perplexities, and treasured it in her heart. As-

\* Compare St. Luke, i. 19.

† The controversy about the precise meaning of the Greek word *κεχαριτωμένη*, translated in the Protestant version, "thou that art highly favoured," and represented in the Vulgate by the phrase "*gratia plena*" is irrelevant to the present argument.

sured now of her election as the favoured "Daughter of the Eternal Father," the incipient "Mother of the Eternal Son," and the actual "Spouse of the Holy Ghost," she does not rest in otiose meditation upon this ineffable prerogative, but rises up, after her act of thanksgiving, as we may say, and goes about her labour of love. She "went into the hill-country with haste to a city of Juda," where her holy cousin resided. The distance was considerable, and the road steep and rugged. We keep the Feast of the Visitation in July; but the event we then celebrate happened shortly after the Annunciation in March. "And she entered the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth." What a subject for a picture! This youthful maiden, scarcely beyond the years of childhood, is met at the entrance of the humble dwelling by her aged cousin, whose furrowed cheek and silvered hair so strangely contrast with the glee of the mother anticipating her first-born. They approach and embrace. Instantly the power of Mary is manifested, and the first grace of the Incarnate Saviour is conveyed through her instrumentality: "It came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." \* Mary's touch had thrilled through her aged cousin's frame; and in one and the same instant the unborn child became a saint, and his mother a prophetess. To the infant, the Virgin Mother of God conveyed a privilege only less than that of her own Immaculate Conception, the privilege of an unsullied nativity; and the communication of this privilege it was which vibrated through the mother, and filled her

\* St. Luke, i. 41.

too with the effluence of the transforming Spirit. Now, then, it is no more she that speaks, but the Spirit of God that speaks within her. Listen, then, to the accents which He indites through her lips. "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she cried with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the MOTHER OF MY LORD should come to me? For behold, *as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears*, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed; for the things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord."\* My brethren, I can add nothing to these words in the way of comment, which would not weaken rather than explain them. I do but ask you whether the Catholic Church must not be safe in honouring the Blessed Virgin, with such a teacher and after such a precedent; whether she have done ill to borrow, in her sweet "Ave," the words of faith caught up by a saint from the echoes of an angel, even though she have crowned them with a petition for the prayers of her who brought grace and benediction into the house she first visited in her character as the Mother of our Lord God? If, indeed, to honour the Blessed Virgin be heresy, then was the archangel Gabriel the heresiarch, and St. Elizabeth his first disciple.

Mary, her mission of charity discharged, and the consciousness of her privilege becoming more and more intense in proportion as she meditated more and more deeply upon it, now, and not till now, breaks forth into her Magnificat of praise. I do not know whether the remark may seem

\* St. Luke, i. 41-45.

fanciful, but to me there appears just the same kind of difference between the canticle of the Blessed Virgin and that of Zachary (known as the Benedictus) which runs through the whole history of the several transactions of the one of which the birth of our Saviour, and of the other of which the birth of his great forerunner, were severally the subjects. I mean, that in the history of the Annunciation the Blessed Virgin receives a position and treatment which differ altogether from those bestowed upon the parents of the Baptist; and it seems to me that what she *receives* in the history, she *claims* in the "Magnificat." In the "Benedictus," Zacharias is entirely silent about his own privilege and that of his holy consort, as the instruments of great blessing to the world, and confines himself to celebrating the praises of God under the name of the "God of Israel." The Blessed Virgin also magnifies her Lord, but with a marked reference to *herself*,—the more observable, surely, when we remember her characteristic humility. "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of *His hand-maid*: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call *me* blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done to *me* great things, and holy is His name." The Immaculate Mother of God can speak, with the profoundest forgetfulness of self, words which, on the lips of a sinner, would be egotistical. I think it can scarcely be an error to dwell upon this (as I may call it) *personal* character of the "Magnificat" as a point of distinction, no less than as one of its many features of transcendent beauty and interest.

If I do not carry you, my brethren, through other passages of the Blessed Virgin's history, as it is contained in Scripture, it is only that I am fearful of wearying you by a repetition of the same language. If her demeanour in her oratory at Nazareth, or in the house of Elizabeth in Judea, have not impressed you with a sense of her dignity in God's dispensation, and her claims upon your reverential homage and love, I suppose that you will remain unmoved even by the scene in the stable at Bethlehem. If in that description you look for any eloquent panegyric upon the Mother of the Divine Infant, or expect to find her brought out upon the page of Scripture in any striking prominence, you will certainly be disappointed; for these are not the modes by which the Holy Spirit operates conviction. This is a kind of evidence which is wanting even in the case of our Lord Himself. The Bible reveals its truths not to those who simply peruse, but to those who ponder it. But if you will reflect upon the part which the Blessed Virgin sustains in the lovely picture of the Nativity; if you will but consider in what light she must have appeared, for instance, to the shepherds of Judea, and afterwards to the royal sages of the East, and put yourselves for a moment in their position, you will understand the force of those expressions in which the Catholic Church addresses her as the channel of access to her Divine Son, or implores her to "show to us poor banished sons of Eve, Jesus, the Blessed Fruit of her womb."\*

And this, too, was the identical office which she

\* The "Salve Regina."

performed towards Simeon and Anna, those patient waiters for Christ, when, at her Purification, she met them at the door of the Temple with the Divine Infant in her arms, and imparted to them, like some priest of the Church with the Holy of Holies in his hand, the Benediction of His presence.

And thus what you know of the Blessed Virgin from the letter of the Bible will help you to think of her in those passages in her life about which Scripture is silent, or which it epitomizes in some brief sentence. Thus will those few words "He was subject to His parents"\* suggest to your thoughts the kind and degree of relation which the Blessed Mother and (in and through her) her holy consort bore towards the Redeemer of the world during all the years which He passed in the Holy House of Nazareth before He came forth on His public ministry. You must needs reflect upon the numberless offices of love which were interchanged between the Mother and the Son; and how she must have been all those many years the favoured depository of the most intimate counsels of God. Nor, I think, can you much wonder if, as her Divine Son comes forth into the world to exercise His ministerial office, His Mother should retreat into the back-ground of the picture, or have been discouraged from crossing His flinty and blood-stained path by the interpellations of feminine tenderness. At length, when the strife is all but over, she reappears in the place of honour, at the foot of His Cross, where she is consecrated by the drops of His Blood to her maternal office in His Church; and

\* St. Luke, ii. 51.

then on the Day of Pentecost bears her part, with the assembled apostles and disciples, in inaugurating the nascent Church.\*

One incident, however, there is in the Scripture history of the Blessed Virgin, which brings out her power in a way not to be overlooked; the part she took in the First Miracle of her Divine Son, at Cana of Galilee.† The narrative is altogether most remarkable. There was a marriage, we read, in Cana of Galilee, “and the Mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples; and the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her, Woman, what is to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters, Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.” Then, as you remember, our Lord forthwith performed the miracle of changing the water into wine. Now consider this entire narrative, as it stands in the Gospel; and say whether the authority claimed by the Blessed Virgin is not altogether of a most unusual kind. She and her Divine Son are evidently the managers, as we may say, of the whole solemnity. The master of the feast retires before them into the character of a secondary personage. It is the “Mother of Jesus” who pleads the cause of the guests; she, who gives orders to the servants in the house of another; she, at whose bidding our Lord performs this great miracle. What a light does not this transaction cast upon the unrecorded events of the thirty years which have intervened since the Annunciation and the Nativity! Here is the fulfilment of the lofty anticipations of the Mag-

\* Acts, i. 14.

† St. John, ii. 1, &c.



nificat; here, the public result of the years of maternal intimacy and filial confidence in the holy home. The modest Virgin of Nazareth, the adoring Mother of Bethlehem, behold her now, after her thirty years' noviciate, as the venerable matron, to whom is not only assigned the place of dignity at the table of her friends, but who, in company with her Divine Son, negotiates the affairs of the awe-stricken but submissive household. As to the words of our Blessed Lord, which some have dared to accuse of harshness, "Woman, what is to Me and to thee," I cannot do better than commend objectors to the explanation of Protestant commentators themselves, who truly observe that the Greek word translated "Woman" conveys no idea of disrespect, but is, on the contrary, a word of honour used in addressing females of the first rank.\* Indeed, it precisely corresponds with the Catholic designation of the Blessed Virgin, "Lady." As to the question, "What is to Me and to thee," whatever its precise import (upon which commentators differ), it evidently was neither understood by the Blessed Virgin, nor intended by our Divine Lord, to convey a refusal to her prayer, or even to interpose a delay in the way of its accomplishment; for she replied to it by giving orders to the servants to obey Him, and He proceeded immediately to work the miracle as she desired.

And now, having set before you a principal

\* D'Oyly and Mant's Bible. The objections to the doctrine of the Ever-Virginity of the Blessed Virgin (founded on St. Matt. i. 25) are of a nature too shocking to Christian piety even to discuss. As far as they are grounded upon the text in St. Matthew, they have been completely disposed of by the Anglican Bishop Pearson.

part of the direct evidence which the Gospel history supplies for the Catholic idea of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I am in a position to allude to, and you, my Protestant hearers, to appreciate, the traces of that idea which are to be found in other parts of the Bible. You will not, I think, find it hard to understand how our commentators should discern an especial reference to our Blessed Lady in that primeval promise which speaks of the Woman as the eternal antagonist of the Serpent,\* or how they should discern an analogy, or rather antithesis, between the first Eve, who brought death into the world, and the second Eve, who, in Christ, is the Mother of all the faithful, parallel to that which Scripture intimates between the first Adam, who fell, and the Second, who overcame.† This analogy, in its development, opens out the most beautiful and truthful picture of the office and privileges of the Blessed Virgin; and, among her other prerogatives, leads by natural inference to the conclusion (now established upon the immutable basis of the Faith) of her Immaculate Conception. You will understand, again, how those who read the Bible with a Catholic eye will take the Gospel view of the Blessed Virgin as a key to those prophetic portions of the Old Testament (the Book of Wisdom, the Canticles of Solomon, and the Psalms), in which the Church is shadowed forth under that especially personal image which justifies the Catholic application of these passages to our Blessed Lady, as bearing to the Church the relation of type and antitype at once, in that she is both the impersonation of its character and the model of its office. The same

\* Gen. iii. 15.

† 1 Cor. xv. 22.

may be said of that well-known vision in the Apocalypse, of the "Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet; and on her head a crown of twelve stars;"\* a description so definite and graphic, that we may say of it that it represents the idea of the Church in the form of the Blessed Virgin. And thus you have another view full of the richest materials of thought and devotion, which you may alternately draw upon for the illustration of the office of the Church from that of the Blessed Virgin, or of her office as paralleled by that of the Church. But such considerations, most valuable indeed as an aid to the faith and devotion of Catholics, can scarcely, I think, be pressed, except in the way of hypothetical evidence, into the service of our present Scriptural argument.

Yet from all this mass of secondary and deductive evidence I cannot help selecting one portion, which appears to me to stand upon somewhat of a different footing from the rest; I mean, the Book of Canticles, or, as it is called in your version of the Scriptures, the Song of Solomon. This is a book of a most peculiar character, and, as Protestants admit it into their Canon of Scripture, they may fairly be challenged to give us some account of the manner in which they commonly interpret it. My own belief, grounded upon experience, is, that they are inclined to keep it out of sight, and half wish that it were found in the Apocrypha. Those non-Catholics who are the most respectful in their treatment of the Song of Solomon, pronounce it "highly mystical," and, as such, they would fain transfer it from the hands of the people into the library of the learned stu-

\* Apoc. xii. 1.

dent. But this is impossible; for the Song of Solomon is as much a part of your received Bible as the Books of Genesis or Isaiah: and it is, I repeat it, so peculiar a book, so bold in its imagery, so fervid in its language, that it is quite unsuitable for general reading, unless the student be furnished with a clue to its interpretation, and a safeguard against any mistaken use of it. Now, considering the charge so frequently brought against the Catholic Church of neglecting the Holy Scriptures, it is certainly remarkable that *her* treatment of this inspired Book presents a contrast with its reception at the hands of Protestants, in the very way which would justify her, were she so disposed, in retaliating upon them this imputation of neglect. In our spiritual and devotional books there is no single portion of the Holy Scriptures from which more copious extracts are made than this very Canticle of Canticles. Its language, indeed, is found among the very household words of the devout Catholic. In the Catholic Church (and, as far as I know, in it alone) does this sacred book receive its due rank as part of the inspired Word of God; and I think that no candid person can read it, with whatever bias against the Catholic interpretation of it, without acknowledging that it is a book designed by the Holy Spirit to hold an important place, and answer some great purpose, in the Church. There is, if I may use a homely phrase, "no mistake" about its character; nothing tame, insipid, or ambiguous. What mystical sense it may bear, or what devotional use it may subserve, with the great mass of readers of Scripture in this country, I have no means of knowing; but I know well how the Catholic Church understands

it, and how devout Catholics find in it the very form and phraseology of that affectionate and even amorous devotion of which the Blessed Mother of God is the worthiest among created objects. Its glowing language is incorporated into the offices of the Church like threads of gold, and supplies at once the most exact description of the Blessed Virgin, and the most appropriate terms in which to address her. She is the "flower of the field and the lily of the vallies;"\* she is at once "black" with the livid hues of her passion, and "beautiful" in the lustre of her purity;† "fair as the moon" in sanctity; "bright as the sun" in privilege, and "terrible as an army set in array"‡ to the hosts of evil, who dread her power and fly from her presence; and she is that Immaculate Spouse of the Bridegroom, of whom He says, "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.§ One is my love; my perfect one is but one; she is the only one of her mother, the chosen of her that bore her."|| And as the Blessed Virgin teaches us in this most beautiful of divine poems how to love herself, so likewise does she supply us with the phrases of love wherein to address Him who is her own true love and ours: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love."¶ Yea, and we, too, will interpose our claim to a share of this love, and with her cry out impatiently, "Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou most beautiful among women?"\*\*

In truth, the Song of Solomon is the Scripture

\* Cant. ii. 1.

† Ib. i. 4.

‡ Ib. vi. 9.

§ Ib. iv. 7.

|| Ib. vi. 8.

¶ Ib. v. 8.

\*\* Ib. v. 17.

"Glories of Mary;" the original "Paradise of the Christian Soul," and the repertory of the "Flowers of Catholic Piety."\* It is the colloquy of the Spirit and the Bride; the story of the Loves of Jesus and Mary; than which even the impassioned and exacting devotion of our own age can find nothing in the whole range of saintly literature better fitted to embody its sentiments and express its intensity.

And now, my non-Catholic hearers, if you will not grant me at once that the Bible fully bears out the Catholic estimate of the Blessed Virgin, yet, at least, can you deny that it wholly contradicts the Protestant one? You will remember that, from the first, I disclaimed all desire of pressing the letter of Scripture into a general support of what I called the "devotional inferences" from our doctrines, though I certainly do feel that those inferences are plainly warranted by a consideration of all the facts of the case. But you will allow, I think, that, while the love and veneration which Catholics manifest towards the Blessed Virgin (exaggerated as you may feel them) might flow naturally, if not legitimately, from the language which the Bible employs in speaking of her, the view which wholly ignores and puts her aside, and makes you suspicious even of the most ordinary expressions of honour and reverence in her regard, cannot by possibility be the proper fruit of the Scripture evidence concerning her. Her own prediction, for instance, "All generations shall call me *blessed*," must mean something which, at any rate, is utterly at variance with the light in which she is popularly

\* The names of certain Catholic books of devotion.

regarded in this country. The very epithet "Blessed," as habitually prefixed to her name by Catholics, certainly *looks* like a fulfilment of these words; yet among yourselves even this small token of honour is commonly rejected; and she to whom Elizabeth deferred as the "Mother of her Lord," is, as you well know, scarcely mentioned in your pulpits and religious books, but with some damaging qualification, or under some controversial protest. Many good reasons may be given why the Bible does not panegyryze the Blessed Virgin, or place her in the foreground of the Gospel history, as I shall hereafter attempt to show you. None whatever can be assigned for refusing her, on Scriptural grounds, that place in the Christian Dispensation which is due to the MOTHER OF GOD INCARNATE; a place, surely, as proximate to that of God Himself as is compatible with the infinite difference between the Creator of all and the most exalted of those beings who derive all prerogatives from His election, and owe all sanctity to His grace. If, therefore, I can but persuade you that the Protestant idea of the Blessed Virgin, at any rate, has no Scripture warrant, I shall have little doubt that you will speedily go on to recognize the fitness of that maintained in the Catholic Church. You have, in fact, no logical and consistent escape from believing of her all which Catholics believe, and feeling towards her all which Catholics feel, except in the denial of that which you cannot deny without reducing the Bible to a mere dead letter,—that JESUS CHRIST, the Eternal Son of God, was also the true Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## DISCOURSE IV.

### THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS AND THE RELIGIOUS STATE.

No one who is even moderately acquainted with the Scriptures of the New Testament, can have failed to remark how many rules of conduct and descriptions of moral and religious excellence they contain, which are not only without example, but even without recognition, among professing Christians of the present time. Were this degeneracy confined to practice alone, there would be nothing in it which the simple student of the Bible would find it hard to understand. But it is otherwise when, not only do the disciples fall below the standard of practice set before them by their teachers, but even those teachers themselves appear to make large deductions from the rule of evangelical perfection ; to set aside, so far as we can judge, some of our Saviour's chief lessons, and even lay it down as a matter beyond dispute, that many portions of His teaching have become obsolete, and possess little more than a purely historical interest for the Christian of the nineteenth century.

You will readily understand, my brethren, that I am here alluding, not so much to those maxims of our Divine Redeemer which describe the Christian life under images fitted to impress us with a sense of its strictness, and of the many



restraints and sufferings incident to it, as to a class of texts still more startling to the natural instincts of men; in which our Lord appears to counsel, or to command, sacrifices of a far higher order than those of the baser pleasures of sin, or the more worthless satisfactions of the world. Even what may be called, the lower class of evangelical precepts; such sayings, for example, as that of "taking up the Cross daily;"\* "cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye;"† "entering the kingdom of Heaven by a narrow way, and under a strait gate;"‡ or those, again, in which our Divine Redeemer makes His disciples heavily responsible for the uncontrolled thought, or the idle word: even this set of texts, it must be admitted, has no very definite place in the Christian code of the day. But the passages to which I here more directly allude, are yet of another character. Such are, among others, the following: "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess everlasting life."§ "The young man saith to Him: All these have I kept from my youth; what is yet wanting to me? Jesus saith to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me."|| "And another of His disciples said to Him: Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said to him: Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead."¶ St. Luke adds a further instance in

\* St. Matt. xv. 24. † Ib. v. 29, 30. ‡ Ib. vii. 14.  
§ Ib. xix. 29. || Ib. xix. 20, 21. ¶ Ib. viii. 21, 22.

point: "Another said: I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house. Jesus said to him: No man, putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."\* To which may be added the yet more remarkable words: "His disciples say unto Him: If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry. Who said to them: All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given."† It is to the latter of these two classes of texts that our present attention is to be confined. And first, as to their general character and scope. They manifestly point to a sort of practical Christianity, common in the days of our Lord and His apostles, but of which it is not too much to say, that the very type has been lost, except in the Catholic Church. They imply, in the first place, that in certain cases, a Christian may be required to quit his nearest and dearest relations, to renounce even the most sacred ties, and to give up his whole property, in order to follow Christ.

This is the general account of the matter; but it does not carry with it the peculiar force of our Saviour's own enumeration of such sacrifices. Observe His words: "Every one that has left, (1) house, (2) brethren and sisters, (3) parents, (4) wife, (5) children, (6) lands." Far be it from any Catholic to undervalue the privations which many a Protestant missionary endures in order to go out and preach the Gospel in some distant land! But such sacrifices, however costly and meritorious—besides that they are but occasional, accidental, and exceptional to a general system,

\* St. Luke, ix. 62.

† St. Matt. xix. 10, 11.

instead of forming an integral part, and an habitual accompaniment and note of it,—do not actually go, by many degrees, the length of the case contemplated in the Gospel. To leave “father and mother, brethren and sisters,” this surely, is not much, for it is what every one does who enters upon the holy marriage state. Our Lord himself provides for this case, where He says, repeating and sanctioning the words of the Old Testament: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh.”\* What, then, is this further relinquishment of “wife and children,” which a Christian must make, in certain events, for the sake of the Gospel? It cannot, surely, be any act inconsistent with the precept which obliges a man to “cleave to his wife.” Our Lord has already laid down the Christian doctrine on this subject with incontrovertible clearness. Hence, your Protestant missionary called to foreign service, is generally precluded, even by a previous obligation, from a part, and a main part, of the sacrifices which our Lord’s words imply. As a general rule, he marries, and takes (as he is bound) the partner of his home to share his trials in the foreign land. No one has a right to censure him for such a course; quite the contrary. He is bound to it, if already married, and has a perfect right to use his liberty in choosing the married state, if not as yet engaged in it. On the other hand, no one can say, and, least of all, those who appreciate the happiness of married life, that the sacrifice such a one makes in leaving his country can, for an instant, be compared with that which is supposed in the

\* St. Matt. xix. 5.

Gospel. Consider our Lord's words with their context, and I think you can scarcely fail to arrive at the conclusion, that when He speaks of a man "leaving wife and children" for the sake of the Gospel, He refers to the *renunciation*, for His sake, *of the blessings of the marriage state*; in other words, to the case of Religious and Ecclesiastical *Celibacy*.

This nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, is, on many accounts, well deserving of your most attentive perusal. It is full of precious instruction, both for the married and the single; but my more immediate object in presenting you with a brief analysis of it, is to establish a point in the present argument. It appears, then, that our Lord was accosted, on occasion of one of His visits to Judea, by a party of Pharisees, who, as usual, tried to ensnare Him by an insidious question, with the view of getting Him, if possible, to contradict or disparage their Law. "Is it lawful," they said, "for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Who, answering, said to them: Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female? And He said: *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh.* Therefore, now, they are not two but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say to Him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put her away? He saith to them: Because Moses, by reason of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be

for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.”\*

These words of our Saviour, as you are probably aware, form the basis of our canon law (of which you have sufficient traces in the practice of the English Ecclesiastical Courts) upon the subject of Marriage and Divorce. The words of our Lord are understood by the Church to preclude, under any circumstances, the dissolution of the marriage bond, and the liberty of re-marriage, in the case of either of the parties bound by the indissoluble contract; and the phrase “putting away,” is interpreted of a mere separation in maintenance, which does not dissolve the marriage bond, nor imply the power of re-marriage on either side. All this it is important to observe in the bearing of the passage on the sequel.

The disciples of our Lord, it appears, who were present at this discourse with the Pharisees, were not inattentive hearers of it; and founded upon it a conclusion which seems anything but unnatural. “His disciples say unto Him: If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry?” If it indeed come to this: that a contract, so critical in its issues, is indissoluble in its obligation, so that, even the direct violation of it on the one part, gives no release from the engagement on the other; it were surely better to abstain from entering on the marriage state at all? To which our Lord replies in these memorable terms: “All men receive not this word, but they to whom it is given.”† Observe,

\* St. Matt. xix. 3—9.

† Ib. xix. 11.

He does not meet the argument of the disciples with a direct negative. He does not absolutely deny the justness of their inference; but answers, in effect: "Your conclusion, although true in a sense, is too rigorous, as thus broadly stated, for the acceptance of the great majority of mankind. It applies to those only, who, by a special vocation of God, are summoned to embrace and act upon it." Or, as He repeats the same sentiment a little farther on: "He that can take, let him take it."\* These words of our Blessed Redeemer are remarkable for two reasons. They bear out, in the first place, the Catholic estimate of the state of Celibacy; and, in the second, they imply, as plainly as words can speak, the Catholic teaching on the subject of Vocation. It is my intention, in this Discourse, to make use of them in both these points of view.

Leaving them, however, for the present, let me accompany you through the latter part of this instructive chapter. It was apparently just after our Lord had laid down the doctrine of religious celibacy that the affecting incident occurred which is recorded in the well-known words: "Then were little children presented to Him, that He should impose hands upon them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said to them, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, *for the kingdom of heaven is of such.*"† Our Lord here, as His manner was, took occasion to ground a great Christian maxim upon the circumstances, to all appearance accidental, of the moment. Ponder these His words, and then say whether the temper of holy child-

\* St. Matt. xix. 12.

† Ib. xix. 13, 14.

hood, which our Lord thus pronounces to be the very staple, as it were, of the true Christian character, be not pre-eminently exemplified in the Religious life of the Catholic Church, which is based upon the three evangelical counsels of perfection, namely, Voluntary Poverty, Perpetual Chastity, and Entire Obedience. The chastity which has grown, by long habits of self-restraint, into the state, as we may call it, of a second childhood, in which it almost reverts to the infantine unconsciousness of sin; the poverty of spirit, which, as in little children, does not so much despise, as simply ignore, the attractions of wealth and worldly greatness; but, above all, the more than patient, the passive submission, which, with the unresisting tractability of some inanimate thing, yields itself into the hands of another, whose word is law, but whose will is love; this counterpart of the temper of holy childhood it was reserved for the Catholic Church to realize, if not in its abstract perfection, at all events, with an approximation which has entirely distanced every rival effort.

And, as if to complete the series of the great evangelical counsels, our Lord had no sooner uttered the saying about little children than He took occasion, again from an incident which looks like chance (if chance could have found any place in events so plainly providential), to promulgate the only remaining rule of the Religious life, which obliges its subjects to the renunciation, not only of wealth, but of property: "And, behold, one came and said to Him, Good Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting? Who said to him: Why askest thou Me concerning good? One is good, God. But if thou

wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He said to Him, Which? Jesus said: Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith to Him: All these have I kept from my youth; what is yet wanting to me? Jesus saith to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. And when the young man had heard this word, he went away sad; for he had great possessions.”\*

Hereupon, our Lord took occasion to utter His remarkable saying about riches: “Amen, I say to you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you: it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.”† Again, the disciples are naturally staggered by the severity of His doctrine: “And when they had heard this, the disciples wondered very much, saying, Who, then, can be saved?”‡ And again our Lord mitigates the strictness of His lesson, pointing to the difference between counsel and precept: “And Jesus beholding said to them: With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”§

And now, which of the Apostles is it to draw from his Divine Master the promise of eternal glory to such as, being called to the state of perfection, consecrate themselves to His service by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience? It is

\* St. Matt. xix. 16—22.

† Ib. xix. 23, 24.

‡ Ib. xix. 25.

§ Ib. xix. 26.



St. Peter, their spokesman, and the representative of the future Church.

Bear with me, my brethren, a few moments, while I try to make you share my own impression of the narrative which follows: "Then Peter answering, said to Him: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee; what, therefore, shall we have?"\* Is there not a peculiar and most touching emphasis in this word "*We*?" I can fancy that great Apostle, with his enthusiastic but as yet imperfectly disciplined temperament, feeling as a child feels when a much-loved parent has just given him a favourable occasion for drawing out a word of personal encouragement. Perhaps the Apostle cast an eye of reproachful compassion upon the unhappy young man who had but a minute ago "gone away sad," and almost instinctively contrasted with his case that of himself and his fellow-apostles. He is speaking in their behalf, as well as in his own, and says (if we may presume to fill out his speech), "We, at least, dearest Lord, have made this great sacrifice of which Thou speakest. Hast Thou no kind word for us? Bless us, even us, O our Father!" Then, having first imparted a special and appropriate benediction upon His Apostles, our Lord goes on to extend His promise to His Church in all ages: "And Jesus said to them: Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife,

\* St. Matt. xix. 27.

or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."\*

I think it impossible for any one, whose mind is not hopelessly warped by prejudice, to read this chapter through with attention, and not allow that the most perfect, or, to speak more truly, the only adequate exemplification of the lessons of our Divine Redeemer, is to be found in that state of Holy Religion which is based upon the three evangelical counsels,—Voluntary Poverty, Perpetual Chastity, and Entire Obedience. Let me briefly draw out the doctrine of the Catholic Church on this subject, with a view of illustrating this parallel.

All Christians are "called to be saints."† All are called to a state of perfection,‡ but not all to the same state. There are divers "mansions" in the earthly, as in the heavenly kingdom of God; various grades of merit in the one, as of glory in the other; different stages or elevations of spiritual and moral responsibility, opportunity, and desert. Each of these states has its own proper "element," which, to such as are created for it, is congenial; and to such as are not, is oppressive, if too high,—meagre and unsatisfactory, if too low. If those who are called to a lower level of perfection find themselves, perchance, in a higher, they are like creatures of earth when suddenly brought into the highly rarefied atmosphere of some lofty mountain. They are distressed, and at length they droop and drop. Souls cannot rise above their proper spiritual level. They whose place is the more elevated region of responsibility

\* St. Matt. xix. 28, 29.

† 1 Cor. i. 2, &c.

‡ St. Matt. v. 48.

can live, indeed, in the lower ; but their powers of action are cramped, and the true end of their being is thwarted, if not frustrated. It is in the body spiritual as in the body social and political. One has his gift after this manner, and another after that. Some are, as we say, "born to great things," manifesting, even in childhood, the germ of their future proficiency. The Christian warfare, like the battle-field of nations, has its heroes, and, when such as are born to heroic distinction are employed in a limited sphere of action, we say that they are "out of their place." Thus in the Church : the vocation of some is to marry ; of others, to remain unmarried ; of some, to quit the world ; of others, to mix with it for its advantage ; of some, to give the superfluity of their wealth to God and the poor ; of others, to "leave all that they possess" for the higher departments of the Christian service ; of some, to cultivate the temper of obedience, with a proper reserve in favour of their own judgment ; of others, to resign their conscience into another's keeping in all that is not manifest sin. This is the Church's doctrine ; and it is most obviously and unquestionably borne out by the very letter of the Bible.

Compare now the seventh chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians with this nineteenth of St. Matthew, and especially the seventh verse of the former with the eleventh of the latter. Our Lord and St. Paul are speaking of the same subject ; the Vocation to the State of Religious Celibacy. Both lay down, or imply, the indissolubility and sanctity of marriage, and in some cases even the obligation of entering the holy marriage state ; both use the same term in reference to the state of celibacy. Our Lord says, that

there are "to whom it is *given*" to take "the word," that is, to follow out the counsel, of holy celibacy. St. Paul says, in like manner: "Every one hath his proper *gift from God*; one after this manner, another after that." What the Bible calls a gift, the Church calls vocation, or God's special election to a certain department of service.

Let me now say a few words of a sort of evidence which, with many minds, comes with greater weight than that of insulated passages. I think it must be apparent to any one who recalls the New Testament to his mind in its general tenour, rather than in its separate disclosures, that those dispositions of mind and states of life, which are summed up in what the Catholic Church understands by the term Evangelical Counsels, or counsels of Christian perfection, are so prominently recognized, and so conspicuously honoured, in the Gospel history, no less than in the Gospel teaching, as to withdraw from any religious body the claim of being truly "scriptural," which does not find in its established system a rule, and in its accredited doctrine a very marked and unmistakable place for such qualities and conditions of life. These three great Christian counsels, then, as I have more than once repeated, relate to the several estates of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience; the estates, observe, or conditions, as contradistinguished from the mere dispositions, which these estates practically represent. Now then consider, first, with respect to the state of perpetual chastity or virginity. It must strike every Christian, one would think, as a great fact, that our Blessed Saviour was pleased to consecrate this same estate in the person of His Blessed Mother; wonderfully

providing that, even in the mode of His own birth into the world, there should be no reversal of the rule which assigns to holy virginity a rank superior even to that of marriage. The condition of holy celibacy receives a still farther and most eminent attestation in the example of St. John the Baptist, our Lord's chosen forerunner; to say nothing of that other St. John, His beloved disciple; in the apostle St. Paul again, and others; examples (especially some of them) the more remarkable from their having been originated under a religious system, the spirit of which was opposed to the institution of celibacy. The Apostolical Epistles, again, are not wanting in similar, and scarcely less palpable, recognitions of holy chastity, not as a virtue merely, but as a state of life. The seventh chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, before referred to, which contains the Apostle's authoritative decision upon a question specially referred to him,\* evidently gives rules which apply, not to particular individuals, but to classes of Christians; for the ground upon which these rules are based is a ground common to bodies of persons.† What appears from this chapter with respect to virgins is implied in the Epistle to Timothy with regard to widows, who are dealt with by St. Paul as a class, or rather as an Order. I would have you reflect, again, upon the injunction, that bishops should be "husbands of one wife,"‡ and widows, "chosen," (that must mean, taken into the service of the Church, as a Catholic Bishop might call a Religious Order to his aid), should have been "wives of one husband."§ These provisions imply the recognition

\* See verse 1.

† 1 Tim. iii. 2.

† See verse 25, &c.

§ Ib. v. 9.

in the Apostolic Church, not indeed (in this instance) of celibacy, but of the state nearest of any to it, the state of widowhood on the female side; and (what is another step in the same direction) of monogamy\* on both. Monogamy, at any rate, if not widowhood, was the necessary qualification in the Apostolic Church, both for the sacred ministry,† and for the Order, as I think we may now call it, of Religious Women. Now, it is evident that the growth of celibacy as an *institution* of the Christian Church must necessarily have been gradual; and that the way to prepare the Church for it was to take under apostolic patronage, so to speak, the conditions of life *nearest* to it, and which in themselves implied a certain restraint upon human liberty in the department of virtue to which celibacy itself belongs.

It is evident, I think, from these testimonies that the Apostles understood their Divine Master to have sanctioned celibacy as a state of peculiar dignity and honour for such as are specially designated to it by the election of God. The same is true, again, of the Evangelical Counsel of Voluntary Poverty. This appears, not only from the peculiar stress laid in every part of the New Testament upon the danger of riches, but from the description of the apostolic community itself. This type has indeed been occasionally and partially fulfilled in the case of particular Protestant bodies, which have endeavoured, with the most praiseworthy intentions, to form themselves upon it. But it has received one only uniform and perfect exemplification from the time of the

\* I use the word "monogamy" as opposed to "digamy," or the state of a second marriage.

† The rule is extended to deacons, 1 Tim. iii. 12.

Apostles to the present day; and this exemplification is found in the rule of Religious Orders and Congregations of the Catholic Church. "And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul; neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them."\*

As to Religious Obedience, the precedent which the Catholic Church finds for it goes farther back and higher up than even the primitive Apostolic Church. The principle of voluntary submission to the authority of another has its divine warrant, and its perfect example, in Him who prepared for a ministry, late begun and early closed, by a thirty years' noviciate, from which He came forth into public life but once, and then in such form, and with such power, as did but cast the brighter lustre upon that long course of preparatory obedience, which the sacred historian was directed to express by a word denoting the subjection of a slave or a vassal,† voluntarily practised towards those whom (O marvel of marvels!) He had Himself created, and gifted both with the powers and the right to command Him. Lastly, that I may bring my Scripture proof to an end, let me direct your attention to that incident in our Saviour's Ministry recorded by St. Luke, when He draws a distinction between the conduct of the two sisters, Martha and Mary; each of whom was engaged at the time in paying Him honour, but in different forms of service. While the one sister employed herself in actively ministering to Him, the other sat at His feet, and listened to His word.‡ Our Lord did not, indeed, reproach the

\* Acts, iv. 32.

† Subditus erat, St. Luke, ii. 51.

‡ St. Luke, x. 38—42.

one, but He preferred the other. "Mary," He said, "has chosen the best part." But if so, then, dear Lord, there are different ways of ministering to Thee; and the best of all is, surely, by a life of contemplation and obedience. Blessed be Thy Name, that, in preferring the one form of love, Thou hast not precluded the other; and Thy Church, after Thee, has consoled the choosers of the lower part by permitting them to invoke St. Martha as their heavenly patroness!

The only remaining question is: Can the purposes of God, in the case of particular individuals, be so clearly discovered, as that each Christian may be matched, so to say, with the state, whether higher or lower, to which God has called him? The Church answers this question in the affirmative; that is, with the necessary allowance for human error and weakness. The providential destination of individuals in the kingdom of God, can be discovered by certain signs and tokens which reach, abstractedly speaking, to the certainty of *criteria*. The "diagnosis" of these signs is a main part of the science of Spiritual Direction. The experienced confessor, if allowed but the means of arriving at his decision, can pronounce upon the "vocation" of his penitent with far greater security than the skilful physician can determine the climate which is suited to the bodily constitution of a patient. The marks of vocation will betray themselves from earliest years, and with a distinctness which it will be out of the power of dissimulation to conceal, or of hypocrisy to feign. The boy, whose favourite post is the altar; his second father, the priest; his best-loved study, the Lives of the Saints; his stolen pastime, the mimic mass;—the



maiden, who seeks retirement, and shuns admiration; who meekly endures as a restraint, or lovingly takes as a duty, rather than courts for their own sake, the vain amusements of the world: these are the souls, elect of God, and precious, which, tenderly nurtured and duly tried, are apt to ripen, as time proceeds, into the holy priest or the devoted nun. And you will find Catholics who have been called by God to the higher grades of perfection, and have humbly obeyed the call, not only ready to make those especial sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel, which we have seen that our Lord requires of them; but also fulfilling to the very letter, though by the mere force of their regenerate instincts, those lessons of heroic self-renunciation, which, as they stand upon the page of the New Testament, appear overstrained and impracticable. Let me remind my Catholic hearers of a well-known case in point. It is related of St. Francis Xavier, that when, being on his way from Rome to the Indies, he passed within a short distance of his own loved home, some of his companions were for urging him to go and make a farewell visit to his family. But the saint steadily replied, that he would press forward on his mission, for that he feared to expose himself to the seductions of domestic influence. Such an anecdote appears strange, and perhaps even repulsive, till we turn to the page of the Gospel, where we read of the new disciple of our Lord, who would have gone home to take leave of those in his own house, but was bidden by our Lord to follow Him without turning backwards.\* And thus we find, that to call such behaviour unkind or unnatural, is to

\* St. Luke, ix. 61, 62.

utter a rash word which includes in its condemnation (although we may not intend it), the sacred words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Yet who could so force our Lord's meaning, as to suppose that He intends such sayings as these to form the general rule of Christian conduct?

See, then, my brethren, how this beautiful doctrine of vocation cuts clean between two popular errors, of which it is easy to see which is the more pious in its intention, but not so easy to determine which is the more pernicious in its effect. The one is that prevailing notion, so favourable to the natural corruption of the human heart, that our Lord gave one set of lessons for His own time, and another for future generations. According to this view, the whole class of texts we have just been considering, is struck out from the Christian statute-book altogether. It is said, for instance, that when our Lord spoke of leaving house and home, and wife and family, for His sake and the Gospel's, He referred merely to the case of the Apostolic Christians: whereas, His words are plainly without any limitation in point of time; and that where, again, He or St. Paul commends celibacy in the clergy, our Divine Lord and His apostle are speaking merely of the (then) "present necessity:"\* whereas, nothing can be plainer, even on the face of Scripture, than that the words of our Lord are here also quite unrestricted as to time; and that while, on the one hand, St. Paul places celibacy on grounds independent altogether of any circumstances of the Church;† on the other, so far as he commends it by arguments especially appropriate to the clergy, he gives reasons for the practice in their case

\* 1 Cor. vii. 26.

† Ib. vii. 7.

which are applicable to all times, though to some more than to others.\* No doubt such a distinction between different ages of the Church might have been drawn in the New Testament, had it so seemed good to the Author, and first teachers of our holy Faith; and I candidly confess, that, to me, the interpretation which presumes such a limitation, is a less violent alternative than that which an opposite school of teachers has been apt to favour, namely, that such passages are applicable to *all* Christians in all times. For this, in short, is the other error to which I am alluding. While one party, out of the Catholic Church, dilutes the Evangelical Counsels into mere sentiments, or historical facts, another is disposed to strain them into precepts of universal obligation. Such has been the tendency of the stricter section of the Established Church, as well as of the older and more religious Dissenters. These well-intentioned teachers have insisted on the doctrine of Counsels, without qualifying it by the doctrine of Vocation; the effect of which course would have been (had not the pious but unnatural attempt reduced itself in practice to an absurdity) to divide the world between profligates and fanatics. The true solution of the supposed difficulty is furnished by the actual provisions of the Catholic Church, and by her alone. Those rules cannot be impracticable which are actually practised; nor that a peculiarity of apostolic times, which is a living property, and visible feature, of the present Church. Surely it exalts our notion of the Gospel, to find that it is as adequate to its professions in one age

\* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 32, 33.

as in another. It surely magnifies our sense of our Lord's greatness as a Divine Teacher and the Founder of an Eternal Kingdom, to discover this perfect unity of character in His Church of all ages. It constitutes a striking evidence of the Divine origin of that Church, that it shares its Founder's attribute of being the "same to-day as yesterday." And, to come at length to an argument which should have especial weight with those who venerate the Holy Scriptures: is it not more pious towards *them* to receive, as the Catholic can receive, their words without qualification, and their lessons without curtailment, than to be forced upon the sorry shift of tying up the one, and paring down the other?

If, then, my brethren, you desire to witness the exemplification of "Bible religion" in the most perfect form which the corruption of the world makes possible, you must undoubtedly look for it in those holy communities which, perhaps, you have been taught to regard as among the most unscriptural and unevangelical of our institutions. If, indeed, you expect absolute perfection anywhere on earth, you would have been disappointed even in the Apostolic congregations themselves, for grievous scandals prevailed even in them. If you stipulate for an exemption from those scandals which our Lord Himself tells us must "needs come;" you must erect your watch-tower, and take your survey, in some other planet than that in which our lot is cast. Scandals there have been in the Catholic Church; scandals, alas! even in her holiest sanctuaries, the very houses in which the elect of the elect, the flower of Christ's little flock, have consecrated themselves, for time and for eternity, to

the service of their Immaculate Spouse. And were there not scandals even in the Apostolic college? If bishops have fallen, did not Judas fall lower? If Popes have been unfaithful, did not Peter deny his Lord? But, were I to grant you far more than my belief of the truth would justify, my argument would stand good. If the Scripture pattern of a Religious be fulfilled in any single instance, remember that such a case is not a mere solecism or accident in our system, but the legitimate result of a general law, and the normal specimen of a recognized organization. One such case is enough to show what the Church can effect in the power of her Lord, where she has her will and her way: what she would always effect, did not human corruption interpose its grating obstacles to the majestic course of her laws, and the beneficent operation of her influences. Even religious vows can only support and fortify the will; they cannot fix it in an impassable groove, or give to it an unswerving determination. The same moral freedom which constitutes responsibility and the capacity of reward, implies the liability to failure; and the temptations which have been successfully overcome by obedience to a religious vocation, will try to avenge themselves upon their conqueror, by pursuing him from the threshold of the cloister to its interior, and there continue their assaults, though with progressively diminishing power, till his trial is over and his crown secure. Even in human affairs, the first step, though it be more than half the battle, is not the whole of it; and the law holds truer still in the case of that career of grace, not even whose later steps form, in themselves, any guarantee for final perseverance.

But it cannot be too often inculcated: (1) that the spirit of sacrifice which is often, doubtless, found out of the Catholic Church, is different, *in kind*, from that effected by her institutions; and (2) that this spirit, which is an excrescence upon other systems, is an element in hers. *They* fail in producing it, in proportion as *their* principles prevail; *she*, only when *hers* are thwarted by that power of sin, which she incessantly combats, but can only in part subdue.

The life of holy religion is hidden from the world; and, like those plants which flower in the night, would shrivel up if brought out into the blaze of day. Yet does it, at times, yield glimpses of its beauty, and tokens of its power, to the world outside. You admire the sister of charity, as she plies her task of mercy by the bedside of the wounded soldier; the religious brother, as he sustains his labour of love among the children of the poor, or the victims of human law; the devoted missionary, who carries the Sacraments to the plague-stricken dwelling, and watches at his post with the vigilance of a sentinel.\* You cannot do otherwise: you are generously-natured, and it is the victory of truth over prejudice. But in admiring the results, you must go on to recognize the secret springs of that fair and orderly exterior. You must judge the tree by its fruits. Depend upon it, my brethren, that saintly heroism is a thing which cannot be extemporized. There is no royal road to perfection. Those orderly habits, that composed demeanour, that

\* During the cholera at Rome, the Jesuit Fathers took it in turn to station themselves at a certain point in the street, that they might always be within instant call to those who were seized with the pestilence.

indomitable patience, that untiring zeal,—are the products of years consecrated to habits of religious regularity, devotion, and obedience. They form the expression of a character, not the demeanour of an occasion. No one is a hero or a heroine at all times, and in all companies, but the saint. And of such saints the Holy Catholic Church is the only true Mother, because she alone in all ages has never ventured to qualify her Lord's words, or to despair of His promises, by deeming that virtue to be unattainable, which is the fruit of the Omnipotent Spirit, produced upon a "branch of God's own planting."\*

\* Isa. lx. 21.

## DISCOURSE V.

THE CONFSSIONAL THE SAFEGUARD OF THE  
GOSPEL LAW.

THE last Discourse was occupied in explaining the nature and doctrine of the Three Evangelical Counsels; of the Vocation, or Divine call, to follow them; and of the holy state of Religion, which is the peculiar sphere of their exemplification. These counsels may be considered, not merely as exhibiting the Christian law under one particular aspect, but as bearing intimately on the character of evangelical morality in general; for they do not constitute merely an insulated feature in the teaching of our Blessed Lord, but have a very definite relation to its other parts and general tenour. In short, the evangelical counsels, besides being a rule, by themselves, for particular Christians, form likewise the type or specimen of Christian morality on the whole; the normal standard of duty according to which it is to be formed, and the representation of it in its most exalted shape. A few prefatory words will be necessary to explain this view of the great counsels of perfection, as to their bearing upon the whole Gospel law, and thus to launch us into the subject of the present Discourse, which relates to the rule of life given by our Divine Lawgiver to all Christians of whatever moral and spiritual capacities.



It must be observed, in the first place, that the evangelical counsels do not represent a different kind of sanctity from the general law of the Gospel, but only a higher degree, or more perfect form of it. What Religious are called to do in the most perfect manner, all Christians are equally called to do according to the measure of their spiritual abilities, and the particular obligations of their proper state. Thus, the spirit of poverty or detachment from riches, is binding upon those who are not required to make heroic sacrifices of their worldly goods. Again, even such as are not specially called to the *state* of chastity, are bound by the spirit, as well as by the letter, of those commandments of God which relate to the virtue of purity; in like manner, the temper of "little children," so far as it is humble, simple, unresisting, and self-forgetting, is enjoined upon those who have no call to place themselves in the hands of another with that merely passive acquiescence which is implied in the counsel of "Entire Obedience." It is in this way that the evangelical counsels act the part of keeping Gospel morality (to use a homely phrase) "up to the mark;" besides their own more special use in forming a "peculiar people" for God out of the whole number of His faithful servants. The Eight Beatitudes, which contain the law of the Gospel, applicable to all, contain also the substance of the Three Evangelical Counsels in a preceptive form; the first inculcates the spirit of poverty; the second of obedience; the sixth of chastity. In testifying to the power of Christ, and His grace by their actual fulfilment in the Church, the counsels of perfection testify also to the indispensable necessity of the virtues which they repre-

sent in their most exalted form, and actually help towards the practice of those virtues. Thus it has often been remarked that the same rule which raises chastity into a special grace and peculiar state has contributed to the sanctification of marriage. Again, our cathedrals, universities, and ancient charitable institutions are evidences of the extent to which the renunciation of wealth has been carried in the Catholic Church of former times, even by many who were not bound to the practice of this virtue by the obligations of the Religious state. The very phrase "founders and benefactors" almost instinctively suggests the idea of times antecedent to the great change of religion. And I suppose that the testimony of our adversaries themselves may be taken to prove the extensive reception of our Saviour's lesson from the example of little children, not only among Religious persons, but among Catholics in general. For no reproach is more commonly brought against us as a body than that we are bound to the Church, or to our superiors, by a kind of slavish dependance; and trust in her, or in them as her representatives, with a "blind faith;" the very aspect, surely, which a compliance with the spirit of our Saviour's words about "little children" would present to those who do not fully, if at all, recognize their obligation.

The same view of the Evangelical Counsels, as standing memorials of the Gospel law, is suggested by considering that, taken one with another, they do actually represent and comprise the whole of that law. Whether we regard it as made up of our duties to God, our neighbour, and ourselves,—or as comprehended in the Ten Commandments, ratified and explained by our Lord,—

or as consisting of the opposites to the Seven Deadly Sins,—or as directed against the leading forms of external and internal temptation, we shall find that, altogether, they not merely represent, but epitomize, the general law of Christ. What is called “poverty” stands for that spirit of detachment from the goods of the world, with its necessary attendants of humility, simplicity, and the like dispositions, which is enjoined even upon such as are not precluded by their state from using this world with moderation. “Chastity,” again, includes everything which is contained in the idea of treating the body as “God’s temple;” \* while “obedience” implies that entire conformity to God’s word and will which completes the catalogue of necessary virtues, and supplies the deficiency of every other part of it. Again, the Three Evangelical Counsels are the great antagonists of the triple temptation. The “world” finds its rival, if not its victor, in the rule of poverty; the “flesh,” in the rule of chastity; the devil, in all, but especially in that rule of obedience, which is opposed to pride, his master sin (if the expression may be permitted), and the great parent of the multitudinous progeny of evil.

And, while the separate counsels thus represent the different branches of Christian virtue, the Religious Life, which is the form wherein they are embodied, expresses, with singular aptitude, the great idea of the Gospel Dispensation, considered merely in its moral aspect. The bond of that Life, the very key-stone of its existence, is formed, as we all know, by the Vows, whereby the

\* 1 Cor. iii. 16, &c.

entire consecration of the will and affections to God is guaranteed, or, at any rate, pledged. Now what is the nature and character of that state, of which vows are the preliminary condition, and the binding tie? Its nature and character are best expressed by the word *service*. This idea, again, is common to the Christian with the Religious state. Neither of them is of the nature of a contract or covenant, which implies more or less of equality between the parties, and equivalency in the benefits interchanged; but both are conditions analogous to those of the servant (or slave), the subject, the soldier, or the child; in which there is a reciprocity of benefits, indeed, but one which results, on the higher side, from no other kind of obligation than such as the most entire dedication will always command at the hands of the most loving generosity. This parallel between the Religious and the Christian states, is attested by the practice of the Church herself, who exacts vows as the initial condition and cementing bond of both alike. The vows of holy religion have their counterpart in the vows of holy baptism. What, then, can, on the whole, be more complete than the parallel? The Religious state is, to the Christian profession, what a sanctuary is to a church. It is entered from the church, as the church is entered from the world. It has rules and privileges of its own in distinction from the church at large, as the church, in distinction from the world outside. It is a part of the church, and yet divided off from it; and, like the church, it is entered by a gate of its own. It has all which the church has, only in a more perfect manner.

We pass, therefore, by an easy and natural

transition, from the Religious to the Christian life; from the counsels which form the privilege of the few, to the law which constitutes the obligation of all; and we find our point of contact between the two subjects in the fact, that each is a kind of service, or state of submission. Our present Discourse will be on the latter of these two states, that of the Christian service; and no word can be found to express this idea of a service more appropriate than that with which the reader of the New Testament is familiar, the "yoke" of Christ.\* In pursuit of our general object, we are to show (1) that this view of the Christian life as a service, or state of submission, is set forth in the Gospel; and (2) we are to inquire how the Catholic Church bears out this same idea of it, and what helps she furnishes towards carrying out such idea; especially in contrast with notions and systems of morality current in the world. If anything be plain upon the face of the New Testament, it is that the Christian Religion is a kind of service. "Service" is the term which best expresses the common idea contained under all those familiar images by which the state of the Christian is represented in the Gospels and Epistles. For example, that state is described by our Saviour as analogous to the state of the *child*.† In many of His parables, again, it is compared to the state of a *subject*;‡ in others, to that of a *servant*:§ and I need not tell you that the notion of servitude, in our Saviour's time, was one which implied a far more rigorous idea of obedience than the same word expresses in later times, and espe-

\* St. Matt. xi. 29, 30.

† Ib. xviii. 23.

‡ Ib. xviii. 2, 3, 4.

§ Ib. xx. 1, &c.

cially in a free country like our own. Nor will you need to be reminded, again, of many passages in the New Testament which exhibit the Christian state under the image of military subordination.\* The Christian is himself pre-eminently a "soldier" of Jesus Christ. See, then, how all these figures agree in implying the notion of responsibility to a superior; of strict obligation; of faithful allegiance,—in a word, of *service*, not other in kind, although less absolute in degree, than that of the Religious life itself. The common character of child, subject, servant, and soldier, is, that all are bound by a *law*, and answerable to some visible superior for their observance of it, as well as accountable for their infractions of it.

It is, surely, a remarkable fact that, ready as the great mass of mankind is to admit this view of the nature of a service, or state of obligation, in matters of this world, it is the very last which is apt to be recognized, even in theory, as the normal condition of the Christian. Of every temporal relation, whether those of domestic, social, or political life, obedience to some visible authority is the rule; but of the direct relation of man to God, not obedience to authority, but rather independence of all visible restraint. From saying that Christians have no responsibility to any human authority for their belief, it is but one step, and an easy one, to imply that they have no responsibility for their practice; or, at least (which is quite enough for our present purpose), the notion of a *system, or state of discipline, framed upon the view of sustaining and aiding the idea of moral obligation*, upon the same acknowledged

\* Eph. vi. 13—17; 2 Tim. ii. 3, &c.

principles as those by which the same conditions are secured in human matters, is entirely and indignantly rejected by nearly all persons, certainly by all large societies (except Catholics and the Catholic Church), as a state of intolerable degradation and real slavery. And what is made the great substitute with the world for this systematic provision, in the case of duties relating directly to God? The substitute is professed to be found in that internal guide and monitor with which individuals are supplied in the form of "conscience." Let us now say something of Conscience.

Conscience, "the light which is in us," as our Divine Saviour terms it,\* is, no doubt, our great help in conduct when rightly formed and duly regulated. It has this advantage over all other monitors and guides, that it is always by our side, and at our command. Every one passes a great portion of time alone, and, even otherwise, cannot always have access to wise friends, kind parents, and enlightened directors. But conscience is ever near, and helps us to many good actions, as well as saves us from many moral falls or slips. Yet our Saviour tells us that this inward light may, perchance, become "darkness;"† and if conscience may be eclipsed, much more may it be overclouded. In fact, it is an excellent and truthful clock, when habitually wound up, and periodically regulated; otherwise it runs down, and deceives, instead of helping us, by its directions: or it may be compared to a mirror, in which, when bright and clear, a man sees his natural face, and thus knows how to deal with

\* St. Matt. vi. 23.

† Ib.

himself; but, like a mirror also, it is easily soiled by the particles of dust with which the atmosphere is charged, and even by the breath of passers-by. In plain terms, conscience, excellent guide though it be, has no chance of doing its work aright, beset and belaboured as it is by the merciless influences of worldly opinion. It cannot be a set-off against temptation, and the false maxims of the world with the majority of men, nor is it.

But I think we have on our side the testimony even of those very persons who advocate the sufficiency of conscience as a guide in morals. Men of the world are earnest for leaving the duties of religion, and of Christian morality, to the protection of conscience; but I want to know whether they are satisfied with the independent authority of this guide in their own departments of obligation? Do they consider that conscience supersedes law and personal authority, in the case of the child, the servant, the subject, or the soldier? On the contrary, they do what they can to fortify the moral position of persons standing in such relations, by every conceivable outward and inward safeguard and check. They restrict natural liberty by rendering men amenable to special enactments, and responsible to living authorities. They secure obedience, and keep down its opposite temper, by a most definite system of rewards and punishments. The servant, for example, acts with an alternative of dismissal and promotion before his eyes; the subject is deterred from crime by the visible terrors of the law, encouraged to loyalty by a tempting array of prizes, distributed, on the whole, or at all events sufficiently for the purpose, with due regard to



personal merit; the soldier has an ignominious death yawning before him, as the penalty of desertion, and the most brilliant distinctions set forth on the other side, as the incentive to fidelity and courage. The world knows that its subjects are men of flesh and blood, and is wise enough to deal with them as such, in all her institutions. Were we to suggest the idea of trusting the welfare of the State, or the fortunes of an army, to the mere force of conscience, and the power of supernatural inducements, we should justly incur the ridicule and contempt of the company in which we were bold enough to propound so extravagant a paradox. Why, then, are we to palm off upon poor Christianity a species of moral security, which we should be ashamed of proposing as a safeguard of our own temporal interests?

For, surely, if the great reason for restrictions upon personal liberty in the case of worldly relations of obedience, be found in the variety and amount of external temptations to disobedience, the same argument applies, in a tenfold degree, to the case of the Christian service. A foe is ever at the Christian's side, whispering into his ear the sweet attractions of independence. An enemy is in his camp, under the most complete of disguises, striving to entice him from his allegiance. But there is one obvious consideration, above all, which proves the necessity of arming the Christian with a breast-plate of triple brass; of encasing the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, in the most impenetrable coat of mail which the celestial armoury can furnish; and that consideration is founded on the nature of the Christian religion itself. Who will deny, that the condi-

tions of that religion involve a regulation, not merely of the actions, but of the words; not merely of the words, but of the thoughts? The Christian legislator has to deal, therefore, with a whole province of difficulty, which the general, the statesman, the master, and even the parent, can afford to ignore. For them it suffices to secure what is called "behaviour," irreprehensible demeanour (including, of course, the regulation of speech as to its more flagrant excesses); but more than this, however they may desire it, they scarcely ever attempt to compass. Thought, in human systems of legislation, is unfathomable by any plummet that has yet been devised. Divine legislation begins, just where human systems find themselves hopelessly at fault, with the cure of hypocrisy. But what says our Saviour? "Whoso is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." "You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."\*

If conscience, unaided, prove no match for temptation in securing even external decency, how much less chance will it have against the temptations to those sins which never see the light? Accordingly, the world's prescription for making men religious, or religiously moral, has proved a failure of the first magnitude. The best "men of the world" are moral only up to the level of the opinions in the midst of which they live. The law of the land does a good deal for

\* St. Matt. v. 22, 27, 28.

them ; their personal or family necessities, a good deal more ; and the opinion of their several circles completes the catalogue of the moral restraints which control them. Out of the Catholic Church, either the Gospel is not looked upon as a law in any sense, or, at least, there is no organized provision for keeping alive the idea that it is a law, or helping Christians to regard and act upon it in that character.

Nay, even this is not all. There is a great school of religion in this country, and in other countries, which teaches, as a part of its very profession, that Christians are not bound by a law at all ; and, what is still more observable, it is this body, above others, which is apt to charge Catholics with neglecting the Bible, and perverting the rules of morality. These teachers absolutely repudiate the idea of moral responsibility in a Christian, as an interference with evangelical liberty. Such words as "duty," and its correlative term "law," are abominations to them, as expressive of notions peculiar, as they would say, to the Mosaic Dispensation, and quite foreign to the very elementary idea of the Gospel message. It is true that this account of the theory of religion popular in this country, does great injustice to the lives of many of its professors, who are virtuous and conscientious men. But that there is such a theory is indisputable. And, this being so, we can hardly wonder if men of the world, who do not profess religion, should be found to favour an idea, which, whatever construction its promoters may put upon it, is, undoubtedly, so congenial to human inclination.

But I gladly retreat from the field of religious controversy, and am quite content to stand by

the second of my two propositions, which is, that out of the Catholic Church there is nothing to remind mankind, *practically*, of the truth, that they are bound to a service, or amenable to a law. Is it not, I ask you, my brethren, the fact that the great idea of religion current in the world, is, that it is "an affair between man and his Maker," which every one is to settle as best he may, with the least possible interference on the part of his neighbour? How exceedingly few people act otherwise than as they are inclined to act, from any simply religious motive! I consider that this is because, out of the Catholic Church, there are no visible checks, no felt obstacles, to the pursuit of natural inclination. With the great exceptions already noticed, men simply follow nature; never recognizing any check to the quest of what they desire, except the presence of some difficulty which is essentially of the same kind with the inclination itself, and still refers duty to one and the same worldly standard. Thus, a man may restrain habits of intemperance, or other excess, by a regard to the remote object of health, character, or worldly prosperity, as paramount to the immediate object of momentary gratification. But this is, after all, but an appeal from Cæsar in one character to Cæsar in another. "Moderation" thus takes the place of excess; open profligacy is replaced by regulated indulgence: but the exchange does not involve a step of approximation towards the Christian rule. The decent and reputable sinner is quite as far off from God as the poor outcast of society; or, if we are to hear the words of our Divine Saviour, even farther.\*

\* St. Matt. xxi. 31.

But now let us change the ground to the Catholic Church, and how different are the facts ! I appeal to you, my Catholic hearers, whether any truth of your religion comes more home to you, every day of your lives, than this : that you are, each of you, *under a law* ; that you cannot always do as you are inclined, but are directly responsible to Almighty God ; and responsible to Him, not in a general and indefinite way, but obliged to render Him an account of your thoughts, words, and actions, through the medium of His visible and accredited representative, the Church. And you, my non-Catholic hearers, or any of your number who shall ever enter (as, I trust, many will enter) the fold of the Catholic Church, will be made aware of your change of position, by nothing more than by the fact, that, for the first time in your lives, you will practically feel, and not merely theoretically recognize, a direct *practical* responsibility to a supernatural power. Yes ; I will venture to say that none of you will have been Catholics for a day, certainly not for a week, without feeling that you have been brought under “ a yoke.” I have no desire to tempt you into the Church under false colours ; I address you in your Saviour’s words : “ Take My yoke upon you.” And to feel yourselves under His yoke, will, I repeat, be among your earliest Catholic experiences. For instance, the first Friday you are Catholics, you will find a something between your natural inclination, or your customary habits, and your actual duty. This “ something ” is a law. There may, possibly, be good reasons why you should not, in a particular case, be held bound by this law. But you are not to be the judge of these matters ;

you are not (as the saying is) to "take the law into your own hands;" you must go and get dispensed from it, if need be, by the proper authority; but a dispensation implies a law, and such release itself involves, on your part, an act of obedience. Nay, the Church even anticipates your actual admission within her pale, by reminding you of the law whereof she is the minister in your regard. She catches you in her golden meshes the moment you are ready to humble yourselves at her feet. She throws her arms around you, and you feel that you are in the power of a superior, as well as in the embrace of a mother. Your very act of submission is itself accompanied by a recognition of her right to call you to an account. You enter her "service of perfect freedom," by the "strait gate" of the Gospel; by the "narrow way" of Sacramental Confession.

What are the ends of Confession? There are several. It is a necessary part of the great Sacrament of Penance. It is a natural vent for the burdened soul. It is the door of mercy to penitent sinners. But, besides all this, it is an ever-present, and most practical memento of our responsibility to God; it is the safeguard of Christian obligation; and, as it were, the model clock by which conscience regulates her motions and keeps the right time.

Confession discharges this office in two ways. First, as it nearly always includes Direction of some kind; if not as a separate act of the judicial authority, yet, probably, as an accompaniment of itself. But even apart from direction altogether, habitual confession itself answers the double purpose of reminding Christians, in a

practical and most impressive way, that they are under the Law of Christ, and helping them to keep that law. The conscience of the Catholic who goes frequently to the tribunal of Penance, is as keen and bright as a two-edged sword. Its reflections are true, its judgments discriminating, and its operations decisive. It is both a mirror of surpassing clearness, and an instrument of incomparable delicacy.

I should have thought it plain to any reasonable person, that such *must* be the practical effect of habitual confession; unless, indeed, he go the length of supposing that some enormous wickedness prevails in the manner of administering the dispensation of which it forms a part. Yet, strange to say, there are those who seem to think that confession is a help, not to virtue, but to sin! To this calumny there is one obvious answer, which depends, not upon assertion, however trustworthy, but upon facts which any one has power to ascertain for himself. If confession minister to sin, and not to holiness, how is it that those unhappy Catholics (by profession) who desire to break the laws of God, are precisely those, not who do, but who do not, frequent the tribunal of Penance? If Confession were darkness, and not light, the darkness would love its own; but since it is light, and not darkness, the darkness flees from it, lest, coming to the light, it be detected and dispelled. It is no such pleasant thing to expose our sins or foibles in the sight of one, who, though a minister of God, is yet clothed in our own nature, that Christians who are insincere in their repentance should seek confession as a pastime.

To sum up the argument. Our Divine Re-

deemer has not liberated His disciples from the duty of observing the moral law of God; but has, on the contrary, set that law upon an immovable basis; invested it with His own authority; recognized, confirmed, and amplified its precepts; promised the aid of His Almighty Spirit in carrying it out; declared that He will judge us by this standard,—rewarding the faithful observance, and punishing the impenitent neglect, of it. These are truths, which, as readers of the Bible, it is impossible for you to gainsay. Look around you, at the various religious bodies in this country, and say where, except in the Catholic Church, you find this only true and Scriptural view of the Gospel, not only taught habitually from the pulpit, and implied in every book of instruction and devotion, but brought before the minds, and pressed upon the consciences, of Christians, by means of a great institution, whose influence is calculated to affect their whole characters, and associate itself with every act of their lives?





## DISCOURSE VI.

THE CONFESSIONAL THE DOOR OF GOSPEL  
MERCY.

THE historical and epistolary portions of the New Testament, present the Gospel to our view in successive stages of its progress, and under different aspects of its character. The four Gospels describe it in its origin; the Acts of the Apostles, in its earliest infancy; whereas, the Epistles,—whether those addressed by St. Paul to particular churches, or those directed by the other Apostles to the benefit of the Church dispersed throughout the world,—presume a more advanced and settled state of the evangelical kingdom. The teaching of our Divine Saviour in the Gospels, and of His Apostles in the Acts, is, for the most part, of the kind which we now call missionary; intended, not so much for the elucidation of doctrinal or practical questions in detail, or for the exhibition of Christian duty in different points of view, as for the plain and forcible statement of fundamental truths, with a view to the conversion of the hearers. But the instruction of the Epistles is for building up, rather than laying the groundwork; and differs from the appeals of the Gospels and Acts, as a Pope's Allocution, or a Bishop's Pastoral, of our own day, might differ from the sermons of a Mission or Retreat. The varying circumstances of the hearers and disciples, in

the two cases respectively, will, of course, furnish the explanation of those differences in tone and subject, of which they formed the cause. Our Lord and His first Apostles had an audience of inquirers, of critics, and of sinners. St. Paul and his brethren, in the Apostolical Epistles, directed their instructions to those already "called to be saints;" the actual members of different Christian communities, or of the Christian community at large, for the general sanctity of whose lives the combined effects of external persecution and a strict internal discipline, furnished the best attainable guarantee.

These considerations will sufficiently account for the frequency throughout the four Gospels (especially that of St. Luke), of the most vivid and affecting exhibitions of the mercy of God to penitent sinners; and for the comparative rarity of similar statements, so directly and forcibly expressed, in the Apostolic Epistles. The words of our Lord, and those examples in His ministry which give so striking an import to His words, are as familiar to the ears of a Christian as the sound of a parent's voice, or the notes of a favourite tune. The soothing invitation, the simple parable, the rebuke to the unloving Pharisee, the defence of the outcast penitent,—these, and a multitude of similar sayings which these will call to mind, are trite enough to be on the lips even of men of the world; whereas few passages in the Epistles, however much to the point, and however frequently insisted on in the way of doctrine, lie so deep in the hearts of the multitude, or rise so naturally to the tongue. And it is an effect of the same vividness of character in the Gospel-teaching, that thoughtful persons can

hardly study it without gaining some insight into the very peculiar state of society which prevailed in Judea and the adjacent provinces at the time when our Lord began His ministry, and which, in different forms of its exhibition, affected the character of His teaching. The ancient and venerable religion of the Jewish people, had come, in process of time, to be split up into schools or parties, which but dimly reflected, if they did not wholly obscure, the great truths which formed its basis. The Law given on Mount Sinai was represented to the eyes of the people through the medium of sectarian traditions, which had just truth enough mixed up with them to deceive. Human nature in its perversest moods had played and practised upon the ancient religion, and now exhibited it, not in its native purity, but through masks of varying but equally fallacious appearance. The contemptuous and hypocritical austerity of the Pharisee had produced its natural reaction in the scepticism of the Sadducee, and the general corruption of the people; and He who combined the most lovely purity with the most compassionate tenderness to sinners, was just the Teacher to vindicate the truth of God from these opposite, but alike flagrant, perversions of it. Hence the mission of our Lord was to put down the pretences of the Pharisee, to confute the errors of the Sadducee, but more than either, "to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that were bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward."\*

\* St. Luke, iv. 18, 19.

The teaching of our Lord in the Gospels, and of the Apostles in their Epistles, being distinguished by these obvious points of difference, the result of corresponding differences in the circumstances of the persons addressed, it becomes an interesting question, whether the class with which the Church has now to deal, in her discharge of her Saviour's ministerial office, be nearer, in its spiritual needs and capacities, to the body of our Lord's hearers, or to the Apostolical communities described in the Acts, and presumed in the Epistles?

Our first impression, I think, would be in favour of its correspondence with the Apostolic type. The preacher of the present day, it might be said, has to deal, not with the unconverted Jew, but with the baptized Christian. Edification rather than conversion must be the object, then, of his ministrations. To treat actual Christians as sinners in need of converting mercy, were to ignore the great privileges of the state to which they have been called. To classify them with the "publicans and harlots" of the Gospel time; or to find their parallel in the Prodigal Son, and promise them a like magnificent reception with him, should they return to their true home, were to discredit and cheapen God's precious mercy, by lavishing it upon those who are not its appropriate objects. This argument has sometimes been used to justify a distinction between the case of unworthy Christians, and that of unconverted Jews or heathens, and to preclude the former from the unreserved benefit of those promises which, it is said, our Saviour limited to the latter.

But explain the fact as we may, there is no

doubt whatever that the Catholic Church acts upon the more liberal and indulgent view of this question. She has but one and the same language for addressing the sinner, whether found among strangers to her fold, or among wanderers from it. She looks not to what is different in their circumstances, but to what is common in their need. She refuses to hamper the munificent offers of her Lord by any qualifications or restrictions. She applies the parable of the Prodigal Son in her public preaching, without caring to know whether her hearers have sinned in different degrees of enormity, or against varying amounts of light and privilege. She sets before her long-lost daughter, making way through the crowd of scoffers, to her feet, the example of the woman of the city "that was a sinner," but found mercy because she loved,—with just the same ungrudging confidence as if Magdalen had been a sinning Christian, or that sinner of yesterday, a heathen unbaptized. She bares the bleeding image of her Lord before all eyes alike, as believing that He had rather be gazed on by the impure, than withdrawn from the penitent.

You may say, if critically inclined, that this view of Penance is open to objection, but I cannot deny that it is the view of the Catholic Church. My purpose in this Discourse is to establish the exact accordance of her teaching and practice in respect of penitent sinners, with the letter of the Bible. But, in the first place, I will ask you to reconsider the matter before us, and I will offer you some suggestions to the point: Why it, perhaps, is that the Church takes her lessons of penitential teaching directly from the practice of our Divine Redeemer Himself,

notwithstanding the obvious distinction between a time at which Christians are gathered out of the world into a privileged community, and that at which the Gospel was first preached to such hearers as were collected at random from a Jewish multitude.

Many things have happened in the progress of eighteen centuries, to throw the Church out of that normal state of discipline in which we find her in Apostolic times. Many a storm has beat upon her; many an earthquake has rent her, and altered her relations with the surrounding world. The world itself has changed its attitude towards her, and has thus forced its great antagonist upon new modes of defence, and new lines of policy. But what has been the diminution of the Church's power, has been also the proof of her elasticity; and what she has lost in compactness of form, she has gained in versatility of address and agility of action. The marvel is, not that she has transformed her aspect, but that she has maintained her ground. The Apostolic Church of the New Testament had every possible advantage towards unity and discipline. At that time the mere profession of Christianity involved the resignation of the external world in every sense and shape; and that which was the guarantee of sincere conversion was no less the inducement to the most intimate union among Christians. The Church of the Apostles was "a little flock," but a compact, and therefore a powerful, one. It was powerful enough, among other things, to enforce very strictly the law of excommunication; and its discipline was thus a perpetual aid to its purity. You see from the Epistle to the Corinthians what summary authority was exercised against noto-

rious offenders ;\* and you learn from other passages that Christians were not permitted to hold any kind of social intercourse with excommunicate sinners, or with those who denied the Faith.† This discipline outlived the Apostolic age ; and vestiges of it are to be found in the Church offices in use at the present day. I may mention, as an instance, that the duties of doorkeeper of the church (still one of the lesser Orders of the Christian's ministry) were, in early times, actually discharged by clerics, whose duty it was to exclude from the house of God all heretics and notorious sinners. You know, too, that no persons were allowed to hear the more solemn portions of the Mass but such as had received ample instruction, as well as been admitted into the Church by the sacrament of baptism. But one of the most practical differences between the earlier and the present Church was in respect of the great sacrament of Penance. A "penance" then, instead of being, as at present, an act of the gentlest mortification, or of mere easy and attractive devotion, was a very serious matter indeed, inso-much that a severe discipline of many years was commonly imposed for a single grievous sin.

It is with those diversities of practice which relate to the penitential discipline of the Church, that I am more especially concerned in this Discourse. The attitude of the earlier Church towards the penitent was one of true love, but it was also one of great severity. There is a side of sin which justifies severity ; and there is likewise a side which draws forth love. Our Saviour Himself was severe against some sins, or sins as com-

\* 1 Cor. v. 3.

† Ib. v. 11 ; 2 St. John, v. 10.



mitted by some persons. Much more should His Church be severe against what she must resent as an affront to Him. Severity against sin, too, answers the purpose of deterring sinners. And severity against sin is not inconsistent with love; or rather it is a part of love. "The wounds of a friend are sweet;"\* and if the Church wounds, it is as God wounds, "chastening whom she loveth."† However, there is also another way of dealing with sinners, besides the severe way; and, so that it prevail to gain them over from the ranks of that odious enemy, it is equally a vindication of our Lord's insulted majesty, with the sterner method. This second way is the road of compassion. Who shall say that the Apostolic Church was not compassionate as well as severe; who remembers how sweetly the great Apostle of the Gentiles, both by precept and example, commends this spirit to the churches which took their lessons from him?‡ However, in the present dispensation of the Church, in regard to sinners, tenderness is the predominating feature. It not only marks her invitations to them, but prevails throughout every part of her actual ministration of the great sacrament of Penance which is ordained for them. The Church is loving in her appeals, more loving yet when she is confronted with the sinner face to face. She listens to his tale of guilt, how aggravated soever, without reproachful words, or even an air of surprise; she binds up his bleeding wounds, and discharges him with her blessing on his head. Her judgment is advocacy; her verdict, pardon; and her sentence, an act of love.

\* Prov. xxvii. 6.

† Heb. xii. 6.

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 14—21; Eph. v. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, et al.

Where shall the Church look for the precedent of a judicial administration so foreign to the course of earthly tribunals? Not even to the practice of her apostolic predecessors, loving as even that was; but a step farther back: to the words and the acts of her Lord Himself. The progress of time and the growth of the world have brought her into direct relations with classes who correspond rather with the motley elements of a Jewish crowd than with the picked disciples of an apostolic community. The heretic, who in the times of a stricter discipline would have had to re-enter the gate even of her visible courts through the humiliating preliminary of a public recantation, now finds himself without obstruction or molestation by the side of her devoted children. The infidel, who would then have been scoffing at her doctrines in the distance, or imagining her portraiture in the dark, now penetrates to the foot of the preacher's chair, and gathers at the fountain-head the materials of his controversy, if haply he be not rather staggered in his unbelief. The profligate, laden with such sins as would have put him out of the pale of Church communion in early times, now walks carelessly into the church, at the door of which he would once have had to crave admission in sackcloth and ashes. And when the Catholic Missionary, with crucifix in hand, rises up before an assembly so variously composed, to preach the Gospel of glad tidings to all people, whither shall he so fitly turn for the matter of his argument and the mode of his address as to the words and demeanour of Him, who lifted up His voice in the streets of Jerusalem, or on the shores of Gennesareth, with such sweet and all-pervading phrases as "Come to Me,

all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you;"\* or, "I am not come to call the just, but sinners;"† or, "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."‡

But it is the Confessional which forms the most perfect counterpart to the tenderness of Jesus. With Him the restoration of the penitent to the full privileges of the just was not a long and difficult process, but a work, like the works of God, brief in space, yet marvellous in effect. The light was created in a moment; God said, and it was. The Holy Ghost came down upon the Church at the third hour; yet it was but the third hour when Peter was preaching in the fulness of that Divine gift, and vindicating his brethren from the impious charge of a merely natural inebriation.§ "The voice of the Lord is in power: the voice of the Lord in magnificence."|| It can with equal velocity demolish the strongholds of sin, and break up the lurking-places of Satan, as it can cleave asunder the tall cedars of Lebanon. Thus it is with the Church; she comes with the step of a conqueror, and vanquishes with her eye. Thus was it with our Lord. He called His disciples, and instantly they arose and followed Him. He rescued the woman taken in adultery from the clutches of her accusers and the wearisome delays of the law; took judgment upon Himself, and dismissed her with a "Sin no more." Mary Magdalen entered the house of Simon a sinner, and left it a commencing saint. She made confession and did penance in one, when she bathed

\* St. Matt. xi. 28.      † Ib. ix. 13.      ‡ St. Luke, xv. 10.  
 § Acts. ii. 15.      || Ps. xxviii. 4. (P. V. xxix.)

His feet with her tears, and obliterated by the perfect contrition of a moment the accumulated sin of a life. Our merciful Lord looked on Peter, and melted him into tears of penitential love, and then he was forgiven, though he had to wait three long and weary days for his final absolution, and a few more for his magnificent commission. The penitent thief, too, like Magdalen, made confession in his act of penance; but his penance, unlike hers, was the penance, not of a devout life, but of a sharp death; and so, together with his absolution, he received a plenary indulgence; and while Magdalen had a longer time allowed her in which to love and suffer, he passed at once from the Cross to Paradise. The absolutions of Jesus were prompt; His penances "sweet and light."\* Yes, my brethren, I repeat it; the pardon of the penitent was no tedious or circuitous process with our loving Saviour. Two acts only constitute its essence; an act of sorrow and humiliation on the sinner's side, and an act of sovereign clemency on the side of God; and both of these acts, although their subjects be diverse, are acts of one and the same power, that power of God, which is glorious in its effects, and quick as lightning in its operation. "Depth crieth to depth;"† the depth of misery to the depth of mercy. But it is the cry of God to God. "The Spirit asketh for us with unspeakable groanings."‡ The Almighty and All-merciful recognizes His own Voice through the plaints of the sinner, and answers it with a promptitude not so much speedy as simultaneous.

\* St. Matt. xi. 30.

† Ps. xli. 8. (P. V. xiii.)

‡ Rom. viii. 26,

How like is all this, my Catholic hearers, to the process of the confessional! If God should touch the heart of a sinner this very evening through my ministry with the creative beams of His converting grace, that sinner might lie down to rest to-night a forgiven penitent. The door of the confessional is open, and it is the door of Gospel mercy. A burst of bitter tears, a sobbed confession, a fervent act of love, an aspiration for grace, and instant pardon is the sinner's privilege—nay, right. The goodness of God is so large, and His promises so unerring, that He gives the true penitent even a vested interest in the mercy which is His own free gift; permitting him to demand with the confidence of an assured claimant, as the fruit of one little act of love, that which the austerities of the Desert could not have purchased, save as evidence of the same love, products of the same grace, and supplements of the same Passion. Not more surely, nor more swiftly, did Magdalen win for herself the remission of sin and the capacities of sanctity, than does every penitent who, with the same loving haste, makes way to the feet of Christ in the confessional, draw health and joy from the ever-gushing fountains of the same beneficent Saviour.

Still, after all, it may be objected, that this is lax doctrine. Why, it may be asked, should the Christian, who has sinned against the light of the Gospel and the grace of the Sacraments, be received back into the very bosom of his Father's family with so prompt a welcome and upon such easy terms, especially in the teeth, as it may be said, of ancient and apostolic precedents? Is not this smoothing of the way of penitence a smoothing also of the way to sin? For a Catholic it is

sufficient answer to say, that the Church so wills it, and that she can never be otherwise than on the side of Christ. But as I am addressing others than Catholics, I will offer the following considerations on this important question, in addition to such as have already been proposed to you.

First, it is not penitential austerity which obtains, as an essential condition, the pardon of the sinner, but the love, of which such austerity is but the fruit and evidence. If the penitent have not a "godly sorrow" for sin, including, at the least, the commencing love of God, all the bodily tortures undergone by the most rigorous of ascetics will not advance him one step towards reconciliation with God. But if he have such disposition, and fulfil (where practicable) the other conditions of the Sacrament of Penance, then his forgiveness is secure. It is the doctrine of the Catholic Church that penance (or "satisfaction") has to do, not with the eternal punishment of sin, but solely with its temporal penalties. The penance, or "satisfaction" (technically so called), which enters into the Sacrament as one of its three parts, does not appertain to the *essence* of the Sacrament, but to its integrity or perfection only; so that, although binding upon the penitent under sin, its omission does not invalidate his absolution. The ancient discipline of the Church was to require "penances" of extraordinary severity and protracted duration; the present is rather to impose such easy exercises as, while they form a test of the penitent's obedience, and an aid to his devotion, are better suited to the enfeebled constitutions and relaxed habits of the present degenerate times. Where, as in the early Church, absolution was commonly delayed till certain pe-

nances had been accomplished, this was done upon the principle, not of fettering the absolution itself with conditions, but of testing the sincerity of the penitent's sorrow. With the same view absolution is often deferred even now; for the penitent must give, at any rate, the requisite signs of a godly and effective sorrow. If the confessor of the present day is pleased to regard a flood of tears, as evidence of such sorrow, not less satisfactory than a certain course of bodily mortification, no one can say that he shows himself a superficial student of human nature, any more than an unfaithful follower of his Divine Master. In short, the precise nature and degree of penance is a matter of mere ecclesiastical discipline, which may legitimately vary in different ages, but no-wise relates to the essentials of the dispensation of Gospel mercy. The *indispensable* condition of pardon, according to that dispensation, is an *internal*, not an *external* act. First comes sorrow for sin upon a religious motive, and with an effective purpose of amendment; next, confession as its outward expression; last, satisfaction as its integrating condition. The first is necessary to pardon under all circumstances; the second, under all circumstances where it can be practised; the third perfects the penitential process, but is not of its vital essence.

Secondly, it should be remembered that even the penitents of our Saviour's time were not heathens. They had lived under a revelation, though an imperfect one. They had the knowledge of the One True God, of His nature, and His attributes. Our Saviour certainly implies that in the Scriptures, rightly used, they might

have found the doctrine of eternal life.\* They had the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue, besides the Worship of the true God. If they did not use these great privileges aright, this is true of many Christians also. Think of St. Paul, a Jew and even a Pharisee; of his zeal, purity, and rectitude of intention, even before he was converted to Christianity. Think, again, of the good centurion, or Joseph of Arimathea, or St. Matthew before his call, or Nathanael, the "guileless" Israelite, or Simeon and Anna. They had no greater advantages than the Pharisees, who were hypocrites, and the publicans, who were extortioners. Or think, my Catholic brethren, of St. Anne, the mother of our Blessed Lady. Perhaps Mary Magdalen, "the woman that was a sinner," or she who was taken in adultery, began life with the same advantages as St. Anne or St. Elizabeth. Surely the difference was less in privilege than in correspondence with privilege; and, though the least in the kingdom of Christ is greater than the greatest under the Law, yet even the Jews had light enough to make them saints, and to have furnished our Lord with the grounds of reproach against His penitents, had He been the confessor to "break the bruised reed, or extinguish the smoking flax."†

But, thirdly, had not even the privileges of the Christian a counterpart in our Saviour's time; and was His mercy stinted as the spiritual advantages against which His penitents had sinned were more conspicuous? One there was, who was once signally unfaithful, not indeed to sacraments, but

\* St. John, v. 39.

† St. Matt. xii. 20.



to the very Lord and Life of the Sacraments. There was one who, for three years and upwards, had been his Lord's constant and highly-favoured associate; heard with his own ears the very words of God, and with his own eyes seen His works, and been even sought out among his brethren for the highest marks of his Master's confidence. That one had been admitted into the very *arcana* of his Lord's incarnate life; had witnessed the choicest acts of His power,\* been visited with a glimpse of His glory,† and received under the awful shadow of His Passion.‡ Nay, on the very night of that great Apostle's fall, his Lord and his God had been at his feet in the posture of humility and in the office of love; and, as if to set him on the very pinnacle of privilege, he had been permitted to appropriate his Redeemer in that Mystery of sweetness, than which even the Christian has nothing in the way of blessing more exalted or more attaching. Yet, when the heart of that great Apostle stiffened for a moment into hardness, our merciful Lord could find no weapon to strike withal severer than one piercing glance of love. "The Lord, turning, looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord..... and he went out and wept bitterly." §

And one there was who, from hardly lower privileges, fell down into infinitely deeper sin. The Apostle who was a traitor, was guilty of a sacrilegious communion, and, while the heavenly manna was yet within him, sold his Lord to His enemies, and himself to the Spirit of darkness. Yet even for him the merciful Jesus could find no

\* St. Mark, v. 37—42.

† Ib. ix. 1—7.

‡ Ib. xiv. 33—42.

§ St. Luke, xxii. 61, 62.

harsher reproach than was conveyed in the words, "Friend, whereto art thou come?"\* Were not these words a pledge that, had the traitor even then sought the feet of his Master in contrition, instead of touching his cheek with the salute of treachery, he would have partaken of the abundance of that never-failing mercy? Ah, my brethren, what an awful end was his! He, too, was smitten with the desire of confession, and sought to ease his soul of its intolerable burden, but he repaired not to the right tribunal. "Then Judas who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients, saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? Look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed, and went and hanged himself with an halter."† Here was, indeed, a confession, complete, as we may say, in all its formalities. It was a kind of horrible antithesis, or diabolical travestie, of the Christian Sacrament. There was repentance, but it was remorse, not contrition; confession, but it rebounded in a taunt; restitution, but it could not undo crime nor rectify injustice; penance, but it was the first instalment of hell, not the sweet and easy price of heaven.

Still you may say, that the facility of pardon through the agency of the Church is an encouragement to sin. But beware, lest through the Church you inadvertently wound your Divine Saviour Himself: and remember, that it is one thing to say that privilege abused is no disqualifi-

\* St. Matt. xxvi. 50.

† Ib. xxvii. 3—5.

cation for mercy,—another, that it is no aggravation of sin. True repentance is the turning point. What does not exclude repentance cannot preclude mercy: what does not include it cannot forestall justice. A thousand mortal sins will not keep the true penitent from heaven; but one suffices to send the impenitent to hell. There is no reason why any sinner should despair, but there is every reason why no Christian should presume. You may die in the next act of mortal sin, and then you “lie as you fall.”\* You may lose your reason before you have time to repent, or be stricken with confusion. You may outrun by your next sin your appointed day of grace. You will, at any rate, throw repentance farther off. We sin as we will, but repent as God wills. We forfeit grace at our peril, seeing that God dispenses it in His own way, not ours; by His own gift, not at our bidding. When we ask it, He never refuses it, but the will to ask is as much an act of His grace, as the answer to our prayer.

And now, my brethren, in conclusion; if you desire to find the most perfect specimen which the world supplies of our Divine Saviour’s demeanour towards sinners, is it not to the Catholic Church that you must turn for the satisfaction of your inquiry? The Catholic Church it is which, here as elsewhere, faithfully represents our Lord in the midst of the most contradictory and deformed exhibitions of His doctrine, which prevail around her. Just consider, for one moment, the popular estimate of sin and sinners; how it oscillates between the most pernicious laxity and the

\* Eccl. xi. 3.

most withering rigour ! First of all, there is the censorious world, which is the old Pharisee to the very life ; setting itself up as a judge in causes where it has no jurisdiction ; earning a reputation for itself by the easy process of trampling down that of its neighbour ; compounding for the most unlimited toleration of the sins to which it is inclined, by the most indignant condemnation of those for which it has no liking. This querulous and dogmatical old housewife of a world would have been just the person to make a great fuss and parade about bringing to justice that unhappy woman who was taken in sin. She is always meddling in such cases, and tries to get the Catholic Church into a dilemma, when she will not help her just in her own stupid way. She, like her prototypes in the Gospel, is for surrounding the Church with a "respectable" circle of listeners ; and when Zaccheus and Magdalen try to push their way through the fashionable throng to confess their sins or make restitution, she, poor silly thing, is amazed and scandalized that the "Holy Church" should delight in such sorry company, or dispense her favours to such unworthy suitors.\* Alas for you, poor sinners, if the world were your only advocate, and the Pharisees your only confessors !

Then there is the "tolerant" world, which does not make matters much better. She turns round upon her censorious sister with just indignation, but with no better pretension to morality. She takes the notorious sinners under her wing, and, while saying one word for them, says, perhaps, two for herself. It is not that she has a compassion

\* St. Matt. ix. 11.

for the sinner, but that she has a sneaking kindness towards the sin. She has a personal interest in disarming the opposition of the censorious, for her own turn may come next, and she may require a precedent for indulgence. She can be sentimental, too, about the Gospel, and the example of our Blessed Redeemer. She can moralize about "*the Saviour's*" indulgence; abuse the proud and censorious Pharisee; parade "the hypocrite" on the public stage, and think she has achieved a mighty moral triumph when she has got all the profligates of the town to cry shame upon him. Nay, she has our Lord's very words constantly upon her tongue, as though they made for her purpose; and she can talk about the "prodigal" and the "lost sheep," and the duty of not "casting the first stone," as if our Blessed Redeemer had been the "friend of sinners" in any other sense than as He was the friend of penitents!\*

How is it, then, my brethren, that the Church Catholic represents what is true in these opposite judgments without involving herself in their grave errors? That she can condemn the censorious with the one school of moralists, without falling into the laxity of the other; befriend the sinner, without favouring the sin? The answer is obvious. The Church starts with the most intense love of *holiness*, and with the most undeviating witness to its necessity as a qualification for Heaven. Hence I have thought it best to place this subject last in the series of those which relate to the moral attributes, as they may be called, of the Catholic Church. First, we saw that she realizes,

\* St. Matt. xi. 19.

in the Evangelical Counsels, a standard of perfection which corresponds with the very highest lessons of the Gospel; next, that she binds all her subjects by a strict rule of obedience, and makes effectual provision for their observance of it: and after thus vindicating to the Church the character of a Teacher of holiness, we may safely contemplate her as a Messenger of mercy. Holiness marks the Church in her every aspect, breathes in her every word, floats around her in her every step. Of none among her doctrines, practices, institutions, is it more characteristic than of those which would be selected as the least severe. Purgatory witnesses to the need of holiness; so do Indulgences; so does devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints: indeed, the whole dispensation of mercy which we have been attempting to draw out in this Discourse, is but an attestation, in another form, to the necessity of Christian holiness. Why is it that the Church, like her Lord, had rather incur the reproach of being the "friend of sinners" than seem to look coldly upon them, but that she would not leave one single soul of all that God has created in ignorance of His beauty, and a stranger to His love? For their sake and for His,—to give Him to them and them to Him, she will draw upon all the resources of her persuasive eloquence, and stoop to all the expedients of her healing art. She will cry aloud; she will mourn in secret; she will consult the diversities of character, the varieties of taste, the caprices of humour—nay, even the very infirmities of our mysterious nature, if haply she may subdue, or attract, or innocently cajole;\* alarm by menace,

\* 1 Cor. ix. 19—23.

engage by allurements, or "catch by guile,"\* the soul that knows not Christ. She will do all but sin. That she will never do, even though it were but so much as to tell one venial untruth, though she might thereby depopulate hell. "Evil," plain evil, she will never do, "that good," even the greatest spiritual good, "may come;" but the worldly reproach of laxity, this she must encounter, if she is to be like her Lord; this she will brave, in so good a cause, just in the measure in which she makes Him the light of her path and the model of her preaching.

Lastly, while the Catholic Church, like her Divine Lord, forbears to upbraid even the guiltiest of her children who return to her, with their abuse of grace and contempt of warnings, she never ceases to follow Him in setting before her disciples in general the magnitude and proportionate responsibilities of their vocation. Such texts as "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see!"† and "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorra than for you,"‡ are often on her lips, not as discouragements to the sick, but as admonitions to the sound. The great mistake of those who do not know her is to suppose that her apologies for the sinner are encouragements to sin. They dip, it may be, into her works of moral theology, and hastily conclude that the standard by which the confessor is to be guided in dealing with the penitent is that by which the director regulates his instructions to the upright. Let all such be assured, once for

\* 2 Cor. xii. 16.

† St. Luke, x. 23.

‡ St. Matt. x. 15.

all, that there is a place in the teaching of the Catholic Church for "all the counsel of God,"\* —for the stirring appeals of the Apostolic, no less than for the merciful allowances of the Evangelic teaching. But the Church would fail of being the adequate representative of her Lord, did she not, while aiding the perfect and fortifying the weak, pour oil into the wounds of the contrite, and speak peace in the ears of the broken-hearted.

\* Acts, xx. 27.





## DISCOURSE VII.

## SACRAMENTS AND SACRAMENTAL RELIGION.

IN the two previous Discourses reference has more than once been made to the Catholic doctrine of Sacraments. This doctrine constitutes one of the most characteristic features of our religion, and one which I believe is popularly thought to be among the least capable of attestation from the Bible. Now, besides recognizing, in detail, Seven great Ordinances to which the name of sacraments has always been given, the Catholic Church, in the very fact of admitting these ordinances as an essential part of her institution, sanctions thereby a certain principle in religion which forms their common basis, and to which all of them, and all other rites and practices sharing their peculiar nature, admit of being referred. The object of the present Discourse will be to show that the Bible, besides giving express warrant for some of these sacraments, and less direct testimony to others of them, contains perceptible traces of the principle, or theory, of religion upon which they in common depend. This principle, or theory, is, that our Blessed Redeemer, as part of the mighty dispensation through which He has made all things new,\* has been pleased to rescue matter from its evil uses,

\* Apoc. xxi. 5.



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incident to the general depravation of the world through the Fall, and consecrate it by His special appointment to be the medium of Divine gifts.

A sacrament is defined by the Council of Trent, to be "a sensible sign which, by God's institution, has the power of effecting, as well as signifying, holiness and justice." In our catechism it is more generally described as "an outward sign of inward grace; or a sacred and mysterious sign and ceremony, ordained by Christ, by which grace is conveyed to our souls." The necessity of a sacramental and ceremonial religion (regarding it simply in a philosophical light) is founded in the wants and attributes of man's nature. Our senses are obviously the great vehicles of impression to the intellect and the soul. Man, being thus constituted, is placed in a world which is every moment appealing to his intellectual and spiritual being through these inlets, in a thousand different ways, and the power of sensible objects is, moreover, aided by the memory and imagination. Memory stores up the past experiences of sense; imagination ekes out, with her powerful art, the picture which sense has left in outline. And, with so faithful an historian on the one side, and so brilliant a painter on the other, poor human nature, if left to itself, has but little chance of rising above the earth to which it so continually tends. Had our first parents kept their innocence, these senses of ours would have been always the ministers of peace, and the auxiliaries of God. But the devil got them over to his side when he tempted Eve by what was beautiful to look upon; and from that day to this they have acted, on the whole, as the fatal links between the world without, and concupiscence within.

"At no time," says St. Augustine,\* "were men ever united in a religion, whether true or false, without the bond of visible seals or sacraments." The sacraments and ceremonies of the Church are part, then, of the great Visible Economy which God has established in the world as an antagonist to the power of the devil, in the constitution of which He has mercifully provided for the capacities of human nature in all its fullness. This visible economy is made up of two great parts, one simply ceremonial, the other, also sacramental; one, that is, merely *significant* of invisible truths, the other *conducive* of Divine grace; and this latter is again divided into the *sacraments*, which convey grace in virtue of their own intrinsic power, and mere *sacramental ordinances*, which convey it through the operation of the recipient's faith and good disposition; in other words, "*ex opere operato*," and "*ex opere operantis*." Instances of the three classes respectively would be: 1. (Of the mere ceremonial); the external adjuncts of Divine worship, whether in the solemnities of its celebration, or in the order of its conduct. 2. (Of "sacramentals"); the use of holy water, the veneration of relics, devotion to the crucifix or to the images of the saints, the blessing of a Christian priest or bishop; and, highest of all, the Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. And 3. Of absolute and real *sacraments*, which convey grace *ex opere operato*, or in virtue of a power to that effect lodged by God Himself within them, there are but these Seven, viz.: Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, Matrimony.

\* Quoted by Perrone, De Sacramentis.

I need not, in this instance, occupy your time by proving that the Catholic Church lays the greatest stress upon the sacraments, and bears testimony in every part of her teaching and practice to the importance of visible religion; for it is perhaps the one of all her characteristics which you will have the least difficulty in admitting to belong to her. My ground, therefore, will be narrowed to the point of showing that sacraments, and a sacramental religion, are in strict harmony with the contents of the Bible.

Bearing in mind the distinction already drawn between sacraments or sacramentals, and mere ceremonies, and discarding the latter department of visible religion, for the present, wholly from your minds, you will please to go along with me in the following inquiry, viz.: What evidence does the New Testament directly, and the Old incidentally, supply, to the use of sensible things ("res sensibus subjectæ"), not merely as expressive *signs*, but as *effective instruments*,\* of Divine blessings? For it is to the New Testament that we must chiefly look for this evidence, if it is to be available to our purpose, inasmuch as sacraments, and their whole class of ordinances, are characteristically an institution of the New Law. Yet the Old Testament will incidentally serve our purpose also; for although it contains the history of a dispensation altogether distinct, and of one in many respects peculiar, it discloses beneath its stream of history an under-current of testimony, whether in the form of teaching or type, to the Christian revelation; or rather, receives light as to its meaning, and remoter bearings, reflected

\* "Efficientia, non tantum significantia."

from the Gospel, whereunto the Old Law was a "pedagogue,"\* or schoolmaster, to conduct its disciples.

In the first place, let it be observed, that the great principle of Sacramental Religion (if I may say it with the profound reverence which such a subject demands) was embodied in the Incarnation itself. The assumption of human nature into the Divine Person of the Son of God was the first great act of that condescension to our sensible needs and capacities, of which the Visible Church forms the prolongation throughout all time, as it was likewise the first institution of a divine channel of communication between God and man, available to us without being derogatory to Him. How beautifully is this view of the Incarnation brought out in the ritual of the Mass! "O God," we say, "who didst wonderfully create the dignity of human nature, and more wonderfully still renew it, grant us by the mystery of this wine and water to become sharers of His divinity, who deigned to become a partaker of our humanity." And again, in the Proper Preface for Christmas Day, the Incarnation of our Lord is set forth in the very same language in which the Church would describe a sacrament: "That while we recognise God in a visible form, we may by Him be caught up into the love of the invisible." Our Divine Redeemer, "God manifest in the flesh,"† is the great abiding Sacrament of the New Law; and those Seven which He has instituted in and for His Church, are as the seven candlesticks which image His presence, reflect His light, and multiply His benediction. And this would

\* Gal. iii. 24.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.



account, surely, for the Gospel history being far more silent about sacraments than it actually is; for as the disciples of our Lord were not to fast while He was with them, so neither would they need sacraments while His visible presence was in some sort a substitute for every, however effective, sign or sacramental manifestation of it. I say this, without forgetting the great and blessed truth, that we in the Church enjoy a still and far closer union with our Divine Lord than even the attendants upon His visible ministry. But I am giving a reason why it is that we hear little of the actual institution of the sacraments till He was on the eve of His departure from the world. Baptism and Holy Order were instituted after His Resurrection; so was Penance. The Holy Eucharist (which completes the number of the four greater sacraments) dates from the night before His death. But there are not wanting, as we shall see, in the Gospels, intimations and anticipations of those other and less indispensable Divine ordinances, which make up the whole seven, and which, it is evident from the subsequent history of the New Testament, were in operation after our Lord's Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, although the Gospel history does not furnish us with the particulars of the institution of all the Seven Sacraments, it not merely shadows out those on whose formal appointment it is silent, but contains the most remarkable testimonies to the sacramental *principle*, or, in other words, that of the use of material and sensible means as vehicles of a divine gift. Sometimes this principle is attested in immediate connection with some of

the seven actual Sacraments of the Church; at others, in a more general way. Thus both the sacraments and sacramentals of the Church find their illustration in the teaching and practice of our Divine Redeemer.

First, as to the Sacraments. To begin with Baptism. What very remarkable words, my brethren, are those of our Lord, in which He lays down, in the plainest terms, the character and indispensable necessity of this great initiatory ordinance of His Church! "Amen, amen, I say to thee," are His words to Nicodemus; "except a man (in the original "one," or "any one"\*) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."† Nicodemus understood these words in a carnal sense, and asked for an explanation. Our Lord gives it as follows: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless any one be born again of *water* and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."‡ What a strange juxtaposition, "water, and the Holy Ghost!"—water, not the sign merely, but the efficient cause, of this "new birth;" elevated to a rank co-ordinate with the Holy Ghost in the production of this mighty transformation! Do not these words impress upon the technical term "baptize" and its relatives a meaning which leaves no doubt how we are to understand it wherever it occurs afterwards without anything to qualify its meaning? What is that "baptism" which, together with belief, is the essential condition of salvation, but this sacramental act of which water is the material medium, and the gift of regeneration, or the new birth, the

\* τὸς.

† St. John, iii. 5.

‡ Ib. v. 5.

interior grace? \* Compare now the parallel passages in which St. Matthew and St. Mark respectively describe the institution of the Sacrament of Baptism; and you will find that these tremendous words were used by our Lord in immediate bearing upon that institution. They were the sequel of that commission: "Going, teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." † In these latter words you have the great Sacrament complete (as the Catholic Church says) in "matter and form," with the further requisite of Divine institution. But perhaps you still say that the idea of connecting the gift of God with a mere material instrument like water, is strange and repulsive to your prejudices. You are for putting some figurative construction upon the word "water," or for "putting asunder what God has joined together," the material medium, and the interior grace. Turn then to the Acts of the Apostles, where you find the Church in actual operation. Here you observe that water is still the agent in this work of regenerating grace. "See," said the Ethiopian convert to Philip the deacon, "here is *water*; what doth hinder me from being baptized." ‡ Again, "Peter answered, Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" § Consider, again, the still more remarkable words of Ananias to St. Paul: "Rise up, *be baptized, and wash away thy sins.*" || Proceed on to the Epistles, which exhibit the Church in its settled form. St. Paul thus writes to his

\* St. Mark, xvi. 16.                      † St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

‡ Acts, viii. 36.                      § Ib. x. 47.                      || Ib. xxii. 16.

Corinthian converts, "But you are *washed*, but you are *sanctified*,"\* &c.; and more pointedly still to St. Titus, "According to His mercy, He saved us by the *laver*" (or bath) "*of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost*."† Here you have an apostle addressing a Christian bishop, and describing the Sacrament of Baptism in the very same way with our Lord Himself, as a new birth by water. Again, the subject of a "new birth," or, as St. Paul calls it, "renovation," is properly a "new creature," and this phrase is twice used by St. Paul‡ to denote the distinguishing privilege of all those who are "in Christ," as compared with the "circumcision" and "uncircumcision," that is, with Jew and Gentile, metaphorically described under the figure of the ordinance analogous to Baptism. This Scripture proof of the Sacrament of Baptism implies an irrefragable testimony to the *principle* of the Sacraments in general. What connection is there between water, this "weak and needy" (or "beggarly") element,§ and the omnipotent Spirit of God, except such as our Saviour establishes in this His doctrine on the subject of Christian regeneration?

But again, our Divine Lord not only taught the sanctification of matter to a divine use, but illustrated this great truth by His own example. How wonderful it is that He who could have operated all the effects of Infinite Power by His mere word, or rather by His only will (for even words are sacramental means), should yet have been pleased to act upon His own creatures by

\* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

† Tit. iii. 5.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

§ Gal. iv. 9.

the intervening agency of matter, as if for the very purpose of foreshadowing in the most emphatic manner the work of His Church in time to come ! When, by one and the same act, He instituted the Sacrament of Penance, and conferred on His Apostles the power of the Keys, we read not merely that He gave them their commission by word of mouth, but afterwards that He "*breathed* on them,"\* conveying to them that Holy Spirit, which proceeded from Him as God, by means of that material Breath which formed part of His nature as Man. Again, in healing the sick, He was accustomed, as we read in St. Mark,† to "lay His hands upon them," not that they needed the intervention of any such act, but as if in anticipation of the power which, after His Resurrection, He promised to believers in His name, that the sick should "recover" upon whom they should "lay their hands."‡ It appears, indeed, that the imposition of hands was an ordinary method with our Lord of imparting Divine gifts. That which in the case of the sick He did for healing, in the case of others He did for spiritual strength, and the confirmation of initial grace ; for we read elsewhere of those who "presented" (as if of custom) "young children to Him, *that He should impose hands upon them and pray.*"§ Pass over a few pages in your Bibles, and a few years in the history of Christianity, and this Imposition of Hands reappears, and for the very same purposes of healing and spiritual strength, among the practices of the Apostolic Church. First, as a means of re-establishing in

\* St. John, xx. 22.

† St. Mark, vi. 5.

‡ St. Mark, xvi. 18.

§ St. Matt. xix. 13.

the faith those who had already received the grace of baptism : " Now when the Apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John ; who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For He was not as yet come upon any of them : but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."\* As a means, secondly, of giving health, spiritual and bodily, to the sick : " Is any man sick among you ? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man ; and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."† Pass on from the Apostolic to the Primitive Church, from the Primitive to the Mediæval, and from the Mediæval to the present, and you find the same commission in force, and the same practices in use, in the form of the two Sacraments of Confirmation and Extreme Unction. Here, then, we have in sacramental use *two* natural substances named in Scripture as convertible to a sanctifying purpose, water and oil.

But we find another most remarkable attestation to the sacramental principle in the actions of our Blessed Lord. Some of you, my brethren, have often assisted at the administration of Baptism in the Catholic Church ; and you have doubtless observed that in one part of the ceremonies the officiating priest touches his lips, and wets

\* Acts, viii. 14—17.

† St. James, v. 14, 15.

the ears and mouth of the child, or catechumen, with the saliva, saying, at the same time, the word "Ephpheta," that is, "Be thou opened." Persons not well acquainted with their bibles are apt to be scandalized by this ceremony; and I have known some who have even presumed to ridicule it. But it is a very dangerous thing, let me tell you, to pass random criticisms upon the practices of the Catholic Church; and for this reason, among others, that such reflections may, peradventure, touch One greater than the Church. Turn to the seventh chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark. There you read that "they brought to our Saviour one deaf and dumb, and besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him." This, as I have already observed, was a sacramental action, by which our Lord was accustomed to impart His healing power; and this, no doubt, was a circumstance well known to the friends of this poor deaf-mute. But our Lord was pleased in this case to adopt another course than that of the imposition of hands used by Him on some occasions. The sacred narrative goes on: "And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and, spitting, He touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, He groaned and said to him, Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right."\* In close imitation of her Lord, the Catholic Church adopts this little sacrament, or sacramental, in that part of her Baptismal office in which she unstops the ears, and unseals the lips, of the child of wrath, that she may open the

\* St. Mark, vii. 33—35.

one sense to hear the Voice of Truth, and the other to speak the words of justice.

Nor is this the only instance in which our Lord performed His miracles through the intervention of a sacramental agency. You remember that remarkable case of the man blind from his birth, the narrative of which occupies one whole chapter in St. John's Gospel. The circumstances preceding, attending, and following that great miracle are all of them recorded with the utmost minuteness of detail. We read that our Lord prefaced it by calling Himself the "Light of the world," apparently in direct reference to the exercise of the power which He had just been asked to display. The Light He was of the naturally, as of the spiritually blind; and by the mere act of His Almighty Will, He could any moment cause the darkness to fall, like scales, from the eyes, whether of the body, or of the soul. But what do we read was His next action, after revealing Himself in this magnificent character? "*When He had said these things, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes.*" Not content with this sacramental action, He went on to require a further preliminary to the blessing itself, also of a sacramental nature: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloë, which is by interpretation, sent."\*

The present seems a favourable occasion for noticing, though necessarily in a brief and cursory way, the obvious testimony which the Bible gives to another Catholic application of the great Sacramental principle,—I mean the efficacy of Relics, whether for sanitary or directly religious

\* St. John, ix. 1—7.



purposes. Our doctrine upon this subject is, that matter which has once been possessed and vivified by the Holy Ghost, as a portion of one of His living temples (the Body of a Saint), or which has even come in contact with one such body (such as the vestments of some holy Priest, especially if a Martyr), is instinct with a divine virtue, not, indeed, *ex opere operato*, but *ex opere operantis* (dependant, that is, as to its final efficacy upon the recipient's disposition), and communicable, therefore, to such only as bring to the reception of its benefits the condition of an intense faith. Now of all Catholic manifestations there is perhaps none which provokes the ribaldry of the profane more than this faith in relics, and all that is of the nature of a relic. But I think I have read in the Holy Bible of something remarkably like this doctrine on the efficacy of the relics of the Saints. It occurs, indeed, in the Old Testament; but then the Old Testament is certainly part of that Bible for which Protestants contend as a whole. The passage is as follows: "Eliseus" (that is, Elisha) "died, and they buried him. And the rovers from Moab came into the land the same year. And some that were burying a man saw the rovers, and cast the body into the sepulchre of Eliseus. *And when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life, and stood upon his feet.*"\*

Still, you will say that this miracle happened under the Jewish Dispensation. Let us turn, then, to the New Testament. Now, do you remember what a terrible outcry there was in England some years ago when a vestment, or part

\* 4 (P. V. 2) Kings, xiii. 20, 21.

of one, said and believed to be that worn by our Blessed Saviour on the night of His apprehension, was exposed for devotion in a city abroad, and people flocked from all parts of the world to venerate it,—nay, and even attributed to it some wonderful virtue in curing diseases, whether of body or soul? The “Holy Coat of Trèves” became quite a proverb, and is still used as such when profane people wish to illustrate the wickedness of our priests and the credulity of our people. Had the persons who objected to this exposition of the relic been prepared with proof positive to show that the object of all this veneration was not the vestment it claimed to be, and that Catholic priests had palmed it upon the people, knowing it to be spurious, or the people had honoured it as such, there would certainly have been a great deal of reason for their objections, though ribaldry and contempt are always misapplied in such cases. But nothing in the way of proof was ever attempted; and it was either taken for granted as a matter of course that the relic was spurious, or implied that it was no proper object of such extraordinary faith even if it were genuine. For my own part, I have never gone into the question; but I see no reason in the world why this Coat should not have been the one actually worn by our Lord, especially when we consider the extreme care with which such disciples as Joseph of Arimathea and others would treasure up everything belonging to Him, and transmit the sacred possession to an equally reverential posterity. At any rate, it is certain that all the people who venerated the Holy Coat of Trèves believed it what it was professed to be. Consider, then, whether their behaviour in regard to it was so

very different from that of the woman who came behind our Lord and touched His garment, and was rewarded for her faith by an instantaneous cure of a chronic and most afflicting malady.\* Was not the act of that poor woman precisely such as in these days and in this country would have been called "superstitious?" I have often seen the poor Irish kiss the hem of the priest's vestment as he was carrying the Blessed Sacrament in his hands; and I confess to you that I cannot imagine where they learned such a singular practice, unless it were from their bibles, or by a tradition which has descended from Gospel times. But you will say, a priest is not our Lord. In answer, I will not insist upon the fact of his being in a Catholic's judgment very like our Lord, unworthy as he is, while bearing the Holy of Holies in his hands, but meet your objection by a different reply. Turn to Acts, chapter nineteen, verse twelve. There you read: "From the body of Paul there were brought to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them." Nay, such faith had those early Christians, that they brought their sick into the streets at another time, and laid them upon beds and couches, that, when Peter came, *his shadow* at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities."† Here, then, you see, as in many other instances, that the *primâ facie* evidence of the Bible is with us, and not with you. You begin by charging the Catholic Church with being "unscriptural." I reply by showing you that, in such and such ways, she carries out Scrip-

\* St. Matt. ix. 20; see also St. Luke, vi. 19.

† Acts, v. 15.

ture even to the letter. Your only possible mode of rejoinder is to say that Scripture is not applicable, in these instances, to the present time. That, indeed, is quite an intelligible position, if you can make it good. But you cannot meet us on both grounds, for they are untenable together. You cannot consistently charge us with contradicting the Bible, and then afterwards adopt a line of argument against us which begins by admitting that we are only too exact in adhering to it.

To return to our main subject. Three out of the four great elements of nature are thus directly named in Scripture as having been reclaimed from the power of the Evil One, and consecrated to divine uses. The water, once employed as the terrible minister of God's avenging power for the destruction of the world, is now converted into the instrument of His saving grace; the air, that treacherous material of the "wind and storm," when collected and condensed into which, it "fulfils His word," and desolates the smiling face of the earth, enters within the sacred portals of that holiest of material temples, the Human Body of our Incarnate Lord, and re-issues from it in the Divine Breath which imparts to the first Priests of the Church the power to forgive sin; the earth, doomed by the voice of God, at the Fall, to yield the baneful fruit of the primeval curse, is moulded by the plastic hand which made it into a compost of sweet medicinal virtue. The fourth great element of nature received its consecration, too, on the Day of Pentecost; and when the Christian beholds that most awful of all the scourges of sin and weapons of chastisement, the material fire, he can contemplate it, not as the agent which swept

from the earth they polluted, the cities of the plain, or which is to burn up this beautiful but devoted world, and itself to be gifted with immortality, to the end that it may accomplish God's purposes upon the wicked ; but as the substance which embodied the great Pentecostal Gift,—the symbol, not of the wrath, but of the zeal of God, which then heralded the conversion of the world, and now burns with bright innocuous light as the watch-fire of His love before the Tabernacle of the Blessed Sacrament.

Two substances yet remain, awaiting, as it were, the creative fiat of their God. Unlike those of which we have just spoken, their natural office is not to destroy life, but to sustain it. The Bread that strengtheneth, and the Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, what place shall be found for them in the sacramental economy of our Lord? They too shall become the basis of a Sacrament, but it is to differ from the rest in character, as it is to exceed them all in dignity. Under their nutritive and exhilarating forms, the Lord of the Sacraments will deign to impart not His grace, but Himself, into the very recesses of the whole Christian man ; body, soul, and spirit. He will convey Himself under a sacramental form ; but He will not repeat the great Mystery of godliness, by uniting with a created substance that Godhead which He has enshrined once for all in the Adorable Temple of His Body. He gives Himself entire, "His Body and Blood, His Soul and Divinity," to the Christian ; but it is now not through the medium, but under the appearance, of His tributary creatures. With what a plenitude of power and versatility of operation did He, as it were, disport with the creatures of His hand, during

the three years of His earthly ministry! The earth, the air, the water, He turned into the material media of sacraments or sacramentals. He dealt too with the Bread and the Wine. The two scanty loaves He multiplied into the feast of the five thousand; elsewhere the wine appeared at His bidding, but another substance was annihilated to make way for it. These miracles were surely, in different ways, the prognostics of that Mystery of love, in which, at the bidding of the same creative Voice, the "bread was changed into the Body, and the wine into the Blood of Christ," who is thenceforth really present, not, as some heretics teach, conjointly with any created substance;\* nor, as others say, manifested *in* a created form (as in His Incarnation)†, but hidden "*under the forms*" (that is, the sensible appearances) of those elements which most fitly symbolize the nutrimental and transforming virtue of this ineffably gracious and life-giving communication. But the Scripture testimony to this greatest of all Sacraments is sufficiently copious to require a separate consideration at our hands.

\* The heresy of Consubstantiation.

† The heresy of Impanation.



## DISCOURSE VIII.

## THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

It is surely the dictate of piety, no less than the correct rule of Scripture interpretation, to understand the *ipsissima verba*, the very own words, of God Incarnate, in their most literal sense, unless there be some plain reason for receiving them with reserve or under qualification. It is no sufficient answer to say, what is yet true, that He was in the practice of conveying doctrine under the form of parable, and in figures of speech. For such portions of His teaching carry their qualification with them, and obtrude it on their surface. No one can doubt, for instance, that, when our Lord speaks of Himself, or His Gospel, as actually *being* what literally He, or it, is not, He means by this strong mode of expression the same which He says elsewhere when He represents these several subjects as "like," or "likened to," certain things which aptly denote them. Thus, when He describes Himself as the "Light of the world," or His disciples as the "Salt of the earth," He either explains, or implies, that He is, or that they are, in the spiritual creation what the light, or the salt, is in the natural. He says too that He is "the Door," or the "true Vine," or the "Good Shepherd;" but immediately proceeds to draw out these similitudes in detail, so as



clearly to explain in what sense He uses the several phrases.

Again, there is in these and similar forms of expression a sufficiently obvious resemblance between the sign and thing signified to leave no doubt upon the mind of a person conversant with the rules of language, that they are mere figures of speech. The qualities of natural and spiritual light, for instance, are evidently so similar, that the word "light" itself is scarcely a metaphor or figure at all, when employed to denote intellectual or moral illumination. The purifying and conservative attributes of salt are so familiarly known, that the mind instantly catches the analogy between the natural substance and its evangelical counterpart. Thus, either by explanation, or by the simplicity and obviousness of the image, our Lord in all such cases precludes the understanding of His words in a merely literal sense.

But in the instance of the memorable words, **THIS IS MY BODY, THIS IS MY BLOOD**, there is neither, on the one hand, any added explanation to obviate the literal construction, nor is there, on the other, any such correspondence between the subject and predicate of the proposition,\* as to convey the idea of a figurative meaning apart from any such comment. These, I cannot but think, are evident distinctions between the words of consecration in the Most Holy Eucharist, and any other words of our Divine Redeemer, of a merely figurative character, with which they have sometimes been compared, with the view of disparaging them. The same distinction, learned authors tell us, is still more strongly marked in the lan-

\* *I. e.* that of which something is said, and that which is said of it.

guage in which the words were actually spoken by our Lord.\*

Let us dwell, for a moment, upon the want of palpable correspondence between the objects brought into connection which renders a merely figurative interpretation of the words of consecration so great a violence to the text of Scripture. Had our Saviour, indeed, neither explained nor added to those other words of His, "I am the Bread of life,"† there would have been, upon the principles just laid down, sufficient reason to understand them in a figurative sense. There is enough of likeness between our Lord's personal office as the nourisher of the world by His saving doctrine and all-efficacious Passion to suggest the idea of a correspondence between Himself and the natural bread, parallel to that which He plainly intends in the saying "I am the true Vine."‡ But the matter appears in quite a different light when we observe that, in the words of consecration, our Lord does not speak of *Himself* under the general designation of "Bread" or a "Vine," but applies the term "Bread" to His Body, and "Wine" to His Blood, with a special reference to those several parts of the Human Nature which He was pleased to assume for us.

The peculiar solemnity, again, of the circumstances under which our Lord uttered the words of consecration seems entirely to forbid the idea of any merely figurative meaning. They did not form part of a connected discourse, but were introduced in immediate reference to an *action* of the highest importance and most sacred character. You all remember the extraordinary preparation

\* Cardinal Wiseman on the Eucharist.

† St. John, vi. 35.

‡ Ib. xv. 1.

which our Lord made for this Last Supper,\* and the vehement desire with which He looked forward to it.† Now, it is certainly the institution of the Eucharist which formed the great fact of that memorable evening. Again, it must be borne in mind that when our Lord spoke these words, the materials of the consecration were actually before Him, and that the words were used with a demonstrative reference to the substances to which they refer. Strong as would have been the phrase (if occurring in an ordinary discourse) "*The bread is,*" &c., it is far stronger when the words are applied pointedly to their subject visibly present. Ask yourselves whether you would have any doubt about understanding these words in their obvious sense, did you not allow some preconceived notion of a physical impossibility to stand in the way? Then consider, on the other hand, that He who uttered them was the very Author of that course of things which we call nature; that same God who "speaks, and it is done; who commands, and it is created."

Moreover, the phrase, "I am the Bread of life," or "the Living Bread which came down from heaven," itself receives a peculiar meaning in relation to the Eucharist from the context of the passage in which it occurs. If you read the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel with the attention which so remarkable a portion of Scripture demands, you will see how plainly the import of this phrase differs from that of any mere figure under which our Lord describes His own character and offices elsewhere. He had just worked the miracle of multiplying the loaves and fishes; and, fearing that so manifest an exercise of power would provoke

\* St. Matt. xxvi. 17.

† St. Luke, xxii. 15.

the crisis He desired to shun, by leading the people to make Him king, He retired into a mountain apart from His disciples. The disciples betook themselves to the Lake and crossed to Capharnäum. While on their way, Jesus approached them, walking on the sea, and consoled them; for they were afraid, owing to the great wind which had sprung up. They received Him into their ship, which immediately righted itself and was soon at the shore. The multitude on the opposite bank of the Lake, desirous of rejoining Jesus and His disciples, took shipping, and crossed to the other side. Jesus reproached them with seeking Him for the sake of the bread which they had seen Him multiply the preceding day, and bade them labour, not for the perishable food, but for the meat which endureth. They ask Him what they must do to work the works of God, and He replies that the work of God was to believe Him whom God had sent. They ask Him, as usual, for "a sign," such as that whereby Moses brought down bread for their fathers from heaven. Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven such as My Father giveth you." Then He continues, "I am the Bread of life." The Jews were still dissatisfied. Our Lord repeats the words "I am the Bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that, if any man eat of it, he may not die." Then again He says, "I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the *Bread that I will give is My Flesh* for the life of the world."\* Here, for the first time, our

\* St. John, vi. 52.

Lord plainly speaks not of Himself generally, but especially of *His Flesh*, as this Bread of life. Observe now in what sense He was understood by His hearers. "The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man *give us His Flesh to eat?*" They evidently supposed Him to speak, not of any intellectual or spiritual perception of His doctrine, but of a literal manducation of His very Flesh. Now is it not most remarkable that our Lord, in reply, does not protest against this construction of His words, but simply reiterates and amplifies them? "Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed." Then He repeats, for the third time, "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him." Observe the mighty privileges attached to this participation of the Flesh and Blood of our Lord. 1. Everlasting life. 2. A glorious resurrection. 3. Personal union with Christ. Nor is this all. "As the living Father," continues our Lord, "hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me."\* What a strong expression, *He that eateth Me!* But now, it appears further, that the *Flesh and Blood* of Christ are the true counterparts of the term, the living *Bread*.† "This," says our Lord, "is the Bread that came down from

\* Verse 58.

† This passage forms a strong testimony to the Catholic doctrine of Concomitance.

heaven." It is the true Christian Manna. "Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever." I think you will admit, that in the figurative sayings of our Lord there is nothing at all comparable with this most remarkable discourse, whether as regards the mysterious significance of the privileges implied, or the momentous character of the blessings attached to it. The only language at all parallel to it is that in which our Blessed Lord discourses with Nicodemus on the New Birth by Water.

Accordingly, it seems to have shocked the weak-minded, and startled even the more advanced, of His hearers, more than any which He is recorded to have uttered. This fact alone is enough to prove that He spoke under no form which conveyed to His audience the idea of mere *similitude*. Immediately after He had ended, we read that "many of His disciples hearing it said, This saying is hard, who can hear it?"\* Observe now, how far, and how far only, our Lord explains and modifies His previous words. "Does this," He asks, "scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that believe not."† I have no wish to press upon you the Catholic interpretation of these latter words. That they were designed by our Lord to explain how the eating of His Flesh and drinking of His Blood of which He had just spoken were not acts of that gross and carnal nature which

\* Verse 61.

† Verses 62—65.

His hearers supposed, we are not only ready to concede, but most forward to maintain. These explanatory words imply that our Lord intended a real, indeed, but yet a mysterious and sacramental manducation. On the other hand, if you contend for any interpretation of these words which consists with the elements remaining after consecration in their own natural substances, I reply that this is quite at variance with the history of the mode in which our Lord's explanation was actually received and understood at the time. The tendency, if not the object, of the interpretation for which you plead is to strip the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist of its mysteriousness, and accommodate it to the level of popular expectation. Such, however, was peculiarly *not* the effect of our Saviour's own commentary upon His previous words. For we read that, notwithstanding that commentary, "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." And as if to connect this defection with the discourse which had just been related, the Evangelist introduces the narrative of it with the words "From that time." So powerful was the effect produced, that our Lord even said to the Apostles themselves, "Will *you* also go away?" and elicited from St. Peter the noble declaration of allegiance, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Now, all this is surely very instructive, and tends to our conclusion, that the "Church of the Bible" is no other than the Catholic. For I have never in my life heard of any large number of persons who were startled, shocked, and alienated from any religious body by the fact of its teaching a merely figurative Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. But I have known of many who

have rebelled against the teaching of the Catholic Church in the instance of this great doctrine, just as the Jews did, and as the disciples were inclined to do, against the doctrine of our Lord. Nay, the teaching of the Catholic Church has again and again had to sustain the prejudice excited by the very same misconception of it which so displeased the Jewish hearers of our Lord. It is said that we inculcate a "gross and carnal" idea of the Eucharistic Presence. This was the very allegation of Cranmer and his party. The Church, with her Divine Lord, utterly disclaims any such meaning; still the objection is reiterated, and the Church has to encounter the blasphemy of her enemies, or to satisfy the misgivings of her own disciples, on the subject of this, more perhaps than of any other, doctrine which forms part of her authorized teaching. And while this chapter supplies us with a most important topic in controversy, does it not also, my Catholic brethren, furnish us with a lesson most profitable to ourselves? We are taught by our Saviour's example that, while it is a paramount duty to obviate misapprehensions of our doctrine by correct explanations of it, we are never to explain it merely on the principle of satisfying objectors, gaining converts, or even retaining disciples. We may have, with our Lord, to bear seeing objectors keep aloof, or followers waver in their allegiance; but better far is it to stand alone in maintaining truth, than to rally thousands around us by compromising one iota of the entire Faith.

Taking, then, this remarkable chapter as a whole; fairly weighing the words of the discourse which it records, and the effect of these words upon the hearers, I ask you whether it be not



natural to understand that our Saviour was here paving the way for that great Institution of His Church which He founded on the night before His death, and whether it were possible that His Apostles, who had listened to that discourse, and *whose attention had been directed to its meaning by the nature of the objections brought against it*, could have failed to receive it as an authoritative *comment* upon the words of consecration uttered by our Lord at the Last Supper; uttered by Him, too, not merely as an act of power which was to begin and end with Himself, but as a precedent to be followed by themselves, and by the priests who should come after them to the end of the world?

The portion of Scripture evidence bearing upon the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist to which I will next direct your attention is that derived from the terms in which St. Paul speaks of this great Sacrament in his Epistle to the Corinthians. The first important mention which St. Paul makes of the Blessed Eucharist, is in the tenth chapter of the first of these Apostolic Letters. He is there seeking to dissuade his brethren from having any kind of participation in the idolatrous sacrifices of the heathen people around them; and he begins by reminding them of their union with Christ by the participation of His Body and Blood. "The chalice of benediction [cup of blessing] which we bless, is it not," he asks, "the communion [or communication] of the Blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of His Body?" Thus united with Christ, and in Him with each other, Christians are "one bread," "one body," in Him who is the "Bread from heaven," and

whose Body is not divided, but One entire Whole. The next words are remarkable. "Behold, Israel according to the flesh; are not they that *eat of the sacrifice, partakers of the altar?*" Then he argues that if the Christians would keep the unity of Christ, they must not sacrifice to devils, because they could not (consistently) "drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; be partakers of *the table of the Lord and the table of devils.*"\* Now, it seems to me that the Catholic doctrine of the Christian Sacrifice is remarkably borne out by these words. The Jews, says St. Paul, are made partakers of *their* altar, by "eating of the sacrifices;" the heathens, in like manner, of theirs, by their idolatrous and diabolical offerings. The argument surely requires of us to understand that Christians are made partakers of a *true* altar, by eating of a *true* Victim, as the Jews of their typical, and the heathens of their false altars. It is an argument from analogy, and presupposes identity of character in the several terms brought into relation with each other. "You cannot," proceeds the Apostle, "drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; be partakers of the table of the Lord and the table of devils." How were the heathen partakers of the "table of devils," but by *sacrificing* to them? Refer these words back to those with which the passage opens. "The chalice of benediction," &c.; and I think you must admit that they support the doctrine of a Sacrifice not commemorative merely, but as real as the antithetic sacrifices with which it is contrasted. But a Real Sacrifice implies a Real Presence.†

\* 1 Cor. x. 21, &c.

† I had not remembered that Perrone builds the same argument upon these words: "Quibus verbis Apostolus

In the following chapter\* St. Paul, in order to incite his Corinthian disciples to a reverential estimate, and use, of the Blessed Eucharist, enters at length into the circumstances of its institution. These he recounts substantially in the same form with the Evangelists, especially St. Luke. Then he proceeds with his own commentary. "For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show forth the death of the Lord till He come." Here I must observe that the term "Bread" applied to the Body of our Lord is by no means inconsistent with our doctrine. The same word is used in the Mass, of the sacred species after consecration,† and refers probably to the figure under which our Lord describes Himself as the "Bread of Life." On the other hand, observe the expression, "you shall *show* the Lord's death." "Therefore," continues the Apostle, "whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this chalice, unworthily, shall be *guilty of the Body and Blood* of the Lord." Further on, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, *not discerning the Body of the Lord.*" How are Christians to

confert mensam et altare Christianorum cum mensa et altari ethnicorum; atqui mensa et altare referuntur ad sacrificium; ergo sacrificium Christianorum confert Apostolus cum sacrificiis ethnicorum; jam vero hæc (esto malis spiritibus seu diis oblata) sacrificia tamen erant proprie dicta: igitur ex mente Apostoli, verum ac proprie dictum censendum est sacrificium Christianorum."—(De Veritate Sacrificii, p. ii. c. 1.) The learned author then goes on to argue in the same way from Heb. xiii. 10, a most remarkable passage, which I might properly have noticed, were I not speaking of the Sacrament rather than the Sacrifice of the Most Holy Eucharist.

\* 1 Cor. xi. 23—30.

† In the prayer beginning "Unde et memores."

*discern* what is not *present*? Consider too the tremendous judgments threatened, and even fulfilled, in the Corinthian Church, in the case of unworthy communicants. "Therefore" (that is, on account of sacrilegious communions), "are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep" (or, have died by the visitation of God). Now the two opinions most common, my non-Catholic hearers, among yourselves, are these; either that there is no Real Presence of Christ at all in the Eucharist, or that this Presence depends, not upon the act of consecration, but upon the faith of the recipient; whereas, our doctrine is, that He is made present, once for all, by the power of His own Life-giving words; and is received by all alike, though by the evil unto condemnation, and by the rightly disposed unto life eternal. Which view of the case corresponds the rather with the literal sense of St. Paul's words; with the dignity he attributes to the Sacrament; and with what he intimates concerning its effects, whether upon the holy, or the wicked?

But the evidence which the Bible gives to the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist is far from being confined to the New Testament. Those indeed who read the Holy Scriptures with a Catholic eye, can trace intimations of this great Sacrament in the Law, the Prophets, and especially the Psalms, sufficient to indicate what seems to them a complete bearing upon it of the ancient ceremonial Dispensation, as if it were in the Mind of the Holy Spirit in all that He wrought in the way of institution, and all that He indited in the way of doctrine. Again, an intimate acquaintance with the original language

of the Old Testament furnishes, as I believe, to the Oriental scholar, evidences to the same point, which those who do not possess the key of such treasures must be content to forego, or rather, should receive on faith at the hands of the learned.\* But the latter of these kinds of proof has no place whatever in an argument, which, as I have often stated, neither implies in its construction, nor requires for its acceptance, any knowledge but such as is accessible to the plain reader of the English Bible. Again, what may be called the *suggestive* testimony of the Bible on this and other Catholic subjects, must necessarily occupy a most subordinate and merely supplemental place in a subject which presumes no distinctively Catholic belief on the part of those to whom it is addressed. So far as in this, or any other of the present Lectures, I advert to this kind of evidence at all, I must be understood not to lay stress upon it, but merely to throw it out for the consideration of those more instructed and advanced students of the Bible who may feel themselves drawn towards it. But nowhere must I be thought to confine my proof to the mere *literal meaning of single texts*. Everywhere I suppose the inquirer to compare passages of the Bible together, without any doctrinal bias, indeed, and (if so be) without any learning and erudition, yet certainly with that amount of intelligence which will enable him to draw a logical inference from two propositions, as well as to exercise a judgment on these propositions each by itself.

The Scripture evidence of the Blessed Eucharist to which, upon this understanding, I wish to invite

\* See especially Cardinal Wiseman on the Eucharist.

your attention, is that founded on the analogy between the great Sacrament of the New Law, and the Manna bestowed upon the Israelites in their passage through the Desert. In the Sixth Chapter of St. John's Gospel, already examined, our Saviour Himself recognizes this analogy. "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the Living Bread, which came down from heaven."\* The Living Bread, that is our Divine Redeemer (as I think we must certainly conclude), *under this form*, resembles the manna in all but its perishableness. Consider the point at which we have now arrived. Our Saviour is the Bread of Life, the Christian manna. Bread is the elementary substance, which, by the words of consecration, becomes His Sacramental Body; and in the history of the Apostolic Church, this same Bread reappears as a *mode of expressing the Body of Christ in the Eucharist*, and again as a bond of Christian union in Christ, involving that marvellously intimate and peculiarly real kind of incorporation which is implied in the expression "members of His Body, of *His Flesh* and of *His Bones*."† Then carry this idea of the heavenly bread, or manna, as, at once, Christ Himself, and yet a kind of actual Food, tending to union with Him and one another by the fact of participating it; carry this idea, I repeat, into the Book of the Apocalypse, and ponder the following words: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: To him that overcometh, I will give the *hidden*

\* St. John, vi. 49—51.

† Eph. v. 30.

*manna*, and will give him a *white counter*,\* and in the counter, a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it."† "I will give the hidden manna." What can this mean but Himself under the form of that Eucharistic Bread? But, that no doubt may remain, our Lord adds, "and will give him [surely as one and the same act] a white counter, and in the counter a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it." Why, if it had been meant to describe the nature of the great Sacramental gift, and its hidden properties of light and consolation, what words could have been used more expressive of the subject?

This repeated description of the Bread of Life under the term "*manna*" is important in two ways. It directs us to the attributes of the ancient manna for the completion of the analogy, and it also (which is very important) *warrants the practice of a typical interpretation of the Old Testament in reference to this especial subject*. What, then, do we read about the characteristics of the Israelitish manna? First, it was food, celestial in its origin, and altogether supernatural in its properties. It is called by the Psalmist, first, "the bread of heaven"‡ (the very expression used by our Lord of Himself); it is then called by the same Psalmist, "the bread of angels;"§ or "angels' food," which seems to mean (indeed, such is the conclusion even of Protestant commentators) food which angels, did they need sustenance, would eat. Here, then, is a Scripture phrase for manna, *precisely appropriate to the Blessed Sacrament*. The "food of angels" must be a wholly "super-substantial" food; a food adapted to a spiritual

\* "Stone" (P. V.)

‡ *Ps. lxxvii. 24* (P. V. lxxviii.)

† *Apoc. ii. 17.*

§ *Ib. ver. 26.*

nature, not gross and material like the "flesh-meat" for which the carnal Israelites clamoured. Then, the manna came down in the form of dew, that most beneficent and refreshing boon of Heaven, the very image under which our Redeemer Himself is represented in the prophecies of His Advent.\* Again, the manna was given to sustain the Israelites during the whole of their wanderings in the Desert; now the Desert is the type of the Christian's pilgrimage in the world of his exile. The manna came down "every day," with a reserve for the Sabbath, which the Gospel has superseded. It was "white like *flour*, flavoured with honey."† It was a Bread of most rare sweetness, and "having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste."‡ Moreover, the manna had this remarkable attribute, that although the children of Israel supposed themselves to have gathered it in different measures, all of them received it in the same quantity.§ Now this is exactly the property of the Divine Sacrament of the Eucharist, as it is so clearly expressed in the hymn of the Catholic Church:—

"And they who of their Lord partake,  
Nor sever Him, nor rend, nor break;  
Nought lacks, and nought is lost:  
The boon now one, now thousands claim,  
But one and all receive the same,—  
Receive, but ne'er exhaust."||

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\* Isa. xlv. 8.

† Exod. xvi. 31.

‡ See Wisd. xvi. 20.

§ Ib. xvi. 18.

|| "A sumente non concisus;  
Non confractus, non divisus;  
Integer accipitur.  
Sumit unus, sumunt mille;  
Quantum isti, tantum ille;  
Nec sumptus consumitur.



The last of the Scripture testimonies to the Catholic dogma of the Blessed Eucharist to which I shall refer, is of the kind I just now called suggestive, and I do not insist upon it except with those who are accustomed to study the Old Testament with a constant regard to its typical anticipations of the Gospel. Yet I would observe that this peculiar use of the ancient Scriptures, though in its application but suggestive, is yet in its principle decidedly warranted by the practice of our Lord and His Apostles, as we have seen in the case of the manna, and shall have occasion to observe in the present branch of our inquiry. I think, then, that it is quite impossible to study the Psalms of David (to omit other portions of the Old Testament) without noticing a sort of running under-current of evidence to this great Sacrament which is quite inconsistent with the hypothesis of mere accident, or of any less prophetic and mystical signification of the words. I will set before you the principal of these passages, observing, as I go on, upon the points about them which relate to our present subject. The kind of passages to which I allude are the following: "Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord; many say, Who showeth us good things? The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us: Thou hast given gladness in my heart. By the fruit of their *corn*, their *wine*, and *oil*, they are multiplied."\* "I will not gather together their meetings for blood-offerings; nor will I be mindful of their names by my lips. The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my *cup*."† Speaking again of the privileges of the elect, David

\* Ps. iv. (P. V. v.) 6—8.    † Ib. xv. (P. V. xvi.) 4, 5.

says, "Thou hast prepared *a table* before me against them that afflict me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my *chalice, which inebriateth me*, how goodly is it!"\* To the same purpose, "These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me: for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God. With the voice of joy and praise; the noise of one *feasting*."† "He fed them with the *fat of wheat*, and filled them with honey out of the *rock*."‡ Again: "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me? I will take the *chalice of salvation*: and I will call upon the name of the Lord."§ Again: "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion. Because He hath strengthened the bolts of thy gates, He hath blessed thy children within thee: who hath placed peace in thy borders, and filled thee with the *fat of corn*."|| Now I suppose there are few persons so wedded to the mere historical interpretation of the Bible as to question that when David speaks of the privileges of God's people, or of the good things of Jerusalem, he makes an ulterior reference to the Christian Church. Grant but this, and you can scarcely doubt that such phrases as the "cup of salvation," "Thou hast prepared *a table* for me," and the repeated mention of "corn and wine," "wheat," and the like, as descriptions of the privileges of God's family, can have no natural interpretation but in the Sacrament of which these

\* Ps. xxii. (P. V. xxiii.) 5.

† Ib. xli. (P. V. xlii.) 5.

‡ Ib. lxxx. (P. V. lxxxi.) 17.

§ Ib. cxv. (P. V. cxvi.) 12, 13.

|| Ib. cxlvii. (P. V. cxlviii.) 12, 13, 14.

terms denote the various characteristics and accompaniments.

But there is an incident in the Old Testament history, the application of which to the Sacrifice and Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist is so obvious, and at the same time so accordant with the Bible itself, that it ought to be referred rather to the department of direct than to that of merely inferential testimony. You remember, doubtless, that most remarkable circumstance in the life of the patriarch Abraham, which is recorded in the Book of Genesis as having occurred when he met Melchisidech, king of Salem, on his return from the slaughter of the kings. The words are these : " But Melchisidech, king of Salem, bringing forth bread and wine (for he was the priest of the Most High God), blessed him, and said : Blessed be Abram by the Most High God, who created heaven and earth."\* Now, remember that this Melchisidech is a type of our great High Priest. There is, I am aware, a difference in the reading of this passage. In our version the particle "for" makes his being a priest the reason of his "offering bread and wine;" whereas, in the Protestant version, it is said merely that he offered bread and wine, "and" that he was a priest. In any case, however, you have this remarkable fact in attestation of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist ; that he whose priesthood, unlike that of Aaron, is eternal, and therefore, as St. Paul argues in his Epistle to the Hebrews,† typical of the Priesthood of Christ, "brought forth *bread and wine*," in thanksgiving, as it would seem, and attestation of the Divine greatness. If this passage stood alone,

\* Gen. xiv. 18, 19.

† Heb. v. 6.

the act of Melchisidech might be explained as one of mere hospitality to the Patriarch; but when it is considered that Melchisidech was certainly the typical Founder of the Christian Priesthood, and that "bread and wine" are the very elements chosen by our Lord as the matter of the great Christian Sacrifice of the Eucharist, does not such a passage as this come most forcibly in corroboration of the other Scripture evidences in favour of the Catholic doctrine? For, as you are well aware, accumulation is an acknowledged strength to all testimony; and proofs, which may be disposed of one by one, derive immense weight from their multiplication.

Probably, indeed, there are very few persons who would deny that some doctrine of the Eucharist is favoured by these various Scripture attestations, or at least by some of them. But let this only be allowed, and it will not be hard upon such a groundwork to build up the Catholic conclusion. The nature, as well as number, of these testimonies; the light which they cast upon the dignity and efficacy of the Ordinance to which they point—upon the singular blessedness of the privilege it implies, and the dreadful consequences of profaning it, find nothing to correspond with them in any doctrine less than that of a Divine Presence intimately real; and if once we go the length of admitting a Real Presence of Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament, we shall find ourselves involved in endless difficulty when we proceed to put limitations, alike without Scripture warrant and ecclesiastical precedent, upon the natural and obvious sense of the words of our Lord Himself.



## DISCOURSE IX.

## CEREMONIES AND CEREMONIAL RELIGION.

WE saw in the last Discourse that a Visible Church must have a visible religion; if, that is, she is to fulfil her mission, as an antagonist to the world, by enlisting the senses—those great vehicles of good or evil to the soul—on the side of God. We saw likewise, that this visible religion, as it exists in the Catholic Church, is either sacramental or merely ceremonial; either, that is, instrumental in conveying grace to the soul, as well as significant of invisible truths, or significant of such truths only, without containing any inherent Divine virtue, or appointed capacity of such virtue. The question of Sacraments, and of the branch of visible religion to which they belong, was treated in the former Discourse as far as our limits allowed and the nature of our argument seemed to require. The latter branch of the subject, which relates to the ceremonial departments of visible religion, remains for present consideration.

Following the line of argument already marked out in the previous Discourses, I shall first state and explain the theory and practice of the Catholic Church in this matter, and then point out what light the letter of the Bible throws upon the question.

You cannot enter a Catholic church while any sacred office is in course of celebration without seeing what stress the Church lays upon the decent and orderly conduct of divine worship. You cannot enter one of our churches at any moment of the day without observing what pains we take to teach by the eye. If our means allow it, we try to make our churches rival or surpass the houses of the nobility, and, if possible, the palace of the sovereign, in magnificence of structure and costliness of internal decoration. The walls, the roof, and even the floor, exhibit the richest products of the quarry, or the choicest specimens of man's inventive and constructive skill. But it is to the Altar, as to a focus of attraction, that the goodliest materials are always gathered. Where stone is elsewhere, here there are marbles; where marbles, here there are gems. Much more, should you be led into one of our churches during the more solemn celebration of the august Mysteries, will you be impressed (whether religiously or otherwise is not here the question) with the outward tokens of devotional joy which the Church loves to display when she is engaged in doing her Lord's greatest work. The vestments of the officiating ministers, the adornments of the sanctuary, the effulgence of the Altar, the sweet strains of jubilant music, and, added to all, the orderly gait and evidently instructed movements of those who take part in the solemn procedure, from the pontiff who celebrates to the youngest boy who assists, will make it plain to you that the Church has not the least intention of leaving the world in undisputed possession of the beautiful works of creation, or the genius and skill of man; but that she claims her

right to employ these gifts of God for her own use, in testifying to the bounty and contributing to the honour of their Giver. Should you be critically and scornfully disposed, you may go back into the world and gaze upon her empty pageants, or take part in her unmeaning ceremonials, and begrudge the Church of God this right to employ for her high purposes what in the world you find so attractive and consider so natural. But if (as I had rather believe) you come with minds devoid of prejudice, and hearts open to conviction, then you will rather admit that it is at least intelligible how the Church—regarding her visible temples as the earthly tabernacles of the Most High God, the imitative Court of Heaven—should study to represent in them the beauty of the celestial palace and the orderliness of the angelic ministries, with the aid of those creatures which God furnishes to her hand, and with at least as much care and attention to punctilio as is found necessary in order to regulate the public receptions, or conduct the solemn progresses, of the kings and nobles of the land.

Yet it is quite possible, that, even with the sincerest desire of doing justice to the Catholic Church in this matter, you might commit one or both of two great mistakes in estimating her judgment upon the question of ceremonial religion. The first and greatest of these misapprehensions would be that of supposing that the Catholic Church puts outward in the place of inward religion; or, as the Apostle says, that she cultivates the “appearance of godliness” to the exclusion of “the power thereof.”\* This is a

\* 2 Tim. iii. 5.



charge very commonly brought against the Catholic Church, and I shall endeavour to meet it fully in the next of these Discourses. The other and very natural mistake which is often made by those who run away with imperfect notions about us, is that of supposing that pomp and splendour are *essential* to the Catholic religion. There are persons in the world, and such as ought to know better, who appear to think that the principal business of Catholics is to assist at High Masses or walk in Processions; and that our religion would starve, and eventually die out, if the Bishops of England were to issue an order that all our organs were to be silent and all our choirs disbanded till further notice. They seem to look upon the Catholic Church as a kind of tragedy queen who is always "flaunting" in robes of tinsel, and whose occupation is gone the moment she falls back upon her working-day attire. The reason of this extensive delusion is evident. These observers never see us but in our holiday dress. They never penetrate (morally at least) beyond the vestibule, nay the portico, of the Church. They form their conclusions upon the most superficial evidence and by the most fallacious criteria. They come to High Mass, for instance, and moralize about the fewness of the communicants; or they think that the Mass means the music, and that Haydn or Mozart were its authors. They forget, or perhaps do not know, that the great work of worship, as I may call it, for the day, is over before the High Mass begins; that every priest they see officiating at the Altar (except the celebrant) has in all probability said his Mass at an earlier hour, and that the Holy Communion was then distributed to many, perhaps even to multitudes, of

those whom they regard as mere spectators at a pageant. Still less have they any idea of those Convents or Houses of Religious Novices, in which a High Mass is never celebrated from one year's end to another's; or of those poor country missions where the scantiness of resources, whether pecuniary or personal, renders the solemn celebration of the Divine Mysteries a matter of impossibility, or at all events of the rarest occurrence. Neither do they reflect, as they might, upon the dreary centuries of persecution during which our own Catholic forefathers, like the primitive Christians before them, were driven to offer the Adorable Sacrifice (and who shall say less acceptably?) in garrets or in cellars, with the very minimum of outward form which the rules of the Church, indulgent as they are to cases of absolute necessity, could allow, consistently with the indispensably essential conditions of a valid celebration.

However, so much as this is certainly true: that, although the extent to which the Catholic Church may carry out the principle of ceremonial religion, or the manner in which she may manifest it, are matters of accident varying with the circumstances of time and place, that principle itself is an essential feature in her visible constitution. In the Masses which were offered in the Catacombs of Rome in primitive times, or under the pressure of our own penal laws in the last century, shorn as those celebrations were of all that could attract the eye of the mere spectator, the great principle of ceremonial religion was recognized as distinctly, although not so fully represented, as when the same Adorable Mysteries are celebrated by the Sovereign Pontiff in the metropolitan church of Christendom. No plea of

necessity, for instance, can dispense the priest from the obligation of celebrating in the sacred vestments and employing certain ceremonies in the Holy Mass; and such requirements are attestations to the rule of "decency and order" by which the Catholic Church enjoins that the external worship of God shall always be conducted. While, then, we contend against the popular notion which supposes the adjuncts of solemnity to be an essential part of the Catholic religion, we must be careful to vindicate the principle of which those adjuncts exhibit but the ulterior development. But it has to be shown that the Bible bears its witness to this principle in its most fully developed as well as in its simplest form.

First, however, let us see clearly what is the point towards which the Bible is to be adduced as a witness. The external worship of God, says the Catholic, being the most important of all the bodily actions we can possibly be called upon to perform, must be secured against negligence by the same apparatus of safeguards which is considered to be indispensable in the case of any other work of moment. The Holy Scriptures have pronounced a malediction upon such as do "the work of the Lord deceitfully"\* (or "negligently"); and there is no reason for supposing that this malediction has less force under the Gospel than it had under the Law. It is founded indeed on a rule which enters into the institutions of man, and regulates the practice of human society. They who wish to be respected must respect themselves; and they who would perform an action which is meant to excite reverence in the minds of the people must be furnished with

\* Jer. xlviii. 10.

due provisions against that negligent and perfunctory spirit which is sure to creep in without them. More especially is this requisite in the case of an *habitual* action like that of the public worship of God; for here the chances of carelessness are increased by the hardening effects of familiarity. "Rarum quod carum," says the Latin proverb; do seldom what you desire to be held in esteem. And since we cannot purchase reverence for the work of God by stinting its exhibition, we must provide for it by regulating its performance. In almost every sect of professing Christians, accordingly, this rule is recognized; but in the Catholic Church alone is it successfully carried out. The only religious body of any note among us which absolutely repudiates external religion is the Society of Friends; and even the members of that body contradict their own principles by wearing a distinctive and professional dress. Of other denominations in this country which profess to regard external religion, the Established Church is that which inculcates the greatest attachment to it; and it is a remarkable testimony to the wisdom of the Catholic Church that those clergymen of the Establishment who are the most reverent, are compelled to take refuge in the rubrical strictness of the Catholic Church as their only security against the irregularity which prevails on every side of them. In short, the only way to secure order in the public administration of divine worship is to multiply regulations at the risk of seeming punctilious, and to make the observance of them not optional or meritorious merely, but obligatory, and, in important instances, heavily so. The first element in ceremonial religion, then, is Order.

Another constituent of it is the Symbolical principle. This refers to the use of sensible objects in expressing spiritual truths; and in this department it is, that ceremonies trench upon sacraments. Every one knows how susceptible human nature is of this kind of influence in matters of this world; how great is the power of pictures, souvenirs, names, and even other symbols more remotely and indistinctly significant, in awakening the impressions of reverence or love. To reject this machinery as an aid to religion would be the hallucination of the madman, if it were not rather the work of the Evil Spirit. Now the Catholic, partly by the help of religious associations, partly from the effect of teaching, and partly in virtue of those natural instincts which he shares with mankind in general, connects certain sacred ideas with certain visible things which are employed by the Church in the external worship of God; as for example, spiritual illumination with the material light, moral purification with water, the unctuous richness of Divine Grace with oil, the idea of oblation with incense, &c. *Colour*, again, is obviously suggestive of certain practical truths, and is accordingly used by the world in its symbolical character on ceremonial occasions. White is considered to betoken purity, black to indicate grief. The Church employs colour in the same way; white to indicate purity, red to symbolize blood-shedding, and so on. *Order*, too, of which we spoke last, enters into the symbolical department, as well as answers its own practical ends. For regularity is the most striking feature in God's natural creation, and thus reminds us of His beauty and power, as well as of the blessed uniformity of Heaven.

Order, therefore, and expressiveness, are the two great elements of ceremonial religion in its simplest form, and enter into its very fundamental idea. We now come to what is not of its essence, but only of its perfection,—costliness. This crowning feature of external religion belongs to the idea of sacrifice, and is part of the Catholic notion of all worship as a tribute of homage to God. And as it implies an act of self-denial in itself, so is it symbolical, or expressive, of that spirit in its visible effect, and thus acts favourably upon the devotion of the worshipper. The church of St. Peter at Rome, apart altogether from questions of artistic taste, excites a grand devotional idea in the mind of a Christian person. It is a complete holocaust of treasure, genius, and skill, offered by man to the honour of the Most High God; a standing monument of the self-sacrificing piety of multitudes, in various times, who have sunk their all in a kind of perennial annuity of praise to God, and who receive their commemoration, not in any personal panegyric, but in that glorious embodiment of their combined and aggregate devotion. And the same result is produced in its measure by every appearance of costliness in the service of God.

It remains to justify this view of ceremonial religion from the page of the Sacred Scriptures, as respects both the general principle, and the several elements into which it has just been distributed.

The Bible narrative reaches over by far the larger portion of the religious history of the world. It begins with the Creation, and it ends with a late period in the life of St. John the Evangelist, who was the survivor of all the Apostles, and lived

almost to the end of the first century of the Christian era. This long lapse of time comprehends the whole of two great dispensations and a portion of the third. The Book of Genesis records the history of the dispensation called the Patriarchal; the remaining Books of the Old Testament refer to the Legal, and the New Testament is confined to so much of the Evangelical as its history covers. Now, Ceremonial Religion was instituted, not, as is often supposed, by the Law of Moses, but from the time of the Creation; and as it did not begin with the Jewish Law, so neither did it end with it. It is part of the great fundamental idea of our external relation to God which appears to have been imparted by God to man from the beginning; hence it is matter not of times and places, but is founded upon a rule of universal and original institution, which our Divine Redeemer virtually sanctioned by the mere fact of not abrogating it. He came "not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it." Its moral portion He fulfilled by enlarging and extending it; its typical portion He fulfilled in His own Person; and out of its rites and ceremonies grew, beneath His omnipotent word, the Sacraments of the Christian Church, and the whole Visible Order of our holy religion. Our Lord, in short, did not annihilate the Divine Polity which He found in existence, but only remodelled and reconsecrated it. The Jewish nation, all but that elect fraction of it which formed the nucleus of the Church of Christ, chose to stand out upon the principle of immutability in religion; and so has continued to this day, though in a dispersed and disembodied form, as a mere antiquarian relic to which the Church can point for illustration, but no longer as the

depository of Revealed Truth, or the Divine instrument for the illumination of mankind.

Moreover, in the religious dispensation which our Lord found at His coming, as the basis of that which He was to build up for future generations, there were perceptible traces of that still older economy which in its time and turn had been the foundation of the Jewish. Two institutions of the Christian Church will directly suggest themselves as remnants, existing at present, of this primæval system: the institution of the Sabbath, and the ordinance of Marriage. The former our Lord vindicated from the character of a mere Legal institution, and adopted it into His code as a warrant for the consecration of a portion of our time to God, although without the ceremonial restrictions by which it was fettered under the Law. Marriage, again, He raised to the dignity of a Sacrament of the Church, expressly referring back the origin of the institution to the beginning of the world.\*

And what we now call Ceremonial Religion, or the principle of order and symbolism in the external worship of God, is just as clearly recognized in ante-Mosaic times, as are those specific institutions which our Lord has adopted, out of the same primæval dispensation, into His Church. The very earliest of the descendants of our first parents made offerings to God as a distinct demonstration of homage and devotion. They certainly performed this act in some way expressive of their intention; Abel, especially, who "offered of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." The external worship of God

\* St. Matt. xix. 5, 6.



was, probably, put upon a formal basis by Enos, and the tradition conveyed through the family of Noë to his descendants; reappearing in the person of Abram, whose first act, after receiving the land of Canaan as his inheritance, was to "build an altar to the Lord."\* Further on, God prescribes the victims of the sacrifice which was to inaugurate the covenant between Himself and Abraham. Then we have the "sign of the covenant" (its external and ceremonial symbol) in the rite of circumcision.† Again, when Abraham was bidden to sacrifice his son Isaac, he set about the heart-rending task with all the care and circumspection of a Priest ordering the arrangements of the Holy Mass. He "cut wood for the holocaust and laid it upon Isaac his son, and he himself carried in his hand fire and a sword."‡ When near the appointed place, he craved permission of his comrades that "he and the boy" might go and "worship." And when he had come to the place which God had shown him, he "built an altar, and laid the wood in order upon it and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar upon the pile of wood."§ How beautiful and touching is all this reverential forethought on the part of the great patriarch in the midst of his parental agony, and under the pressure of what he then believed to be a necessity as inevitable as it was afflictive; this minute observance, as it were, of all the rubrics of the dreadful ceremonial! But the most remarkable instance, perhaps, of all, is that supplied in the history of

\* Gen. xiii. 18.

† Ib. xvii. 11.

‡ Ib. xxii. 6.

§ Ib. ver. 9.

the patriarch Jacob. When Jacob fled from the wrath of Esau, after obtaining from his father Isaac the blessing of the first-born, and was on his way to Mesopotamia, he came to a certain spot, where he laid himself down to rest upon the stones which he found there, and saw in his sleep the vision of the ladder, with angels ascending and descending, and the "Lord God leaning upon it." And the Lord spoke to him sweet and comfortable words of benediction and promise. When he awoke from his sleep, he exclaimed, "Indeed the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And trembling he said, How terrible is this place: this is no other but the House of God, and the gate of heaven! And Jacob, arising in the morning, took the stone which he had laid under his head, and set it up for a title, pouring oil upon the top of it. And he made a vow.....and said, This stone, which I have set up for a title, shall be called the House of God: and of all things that Thou shalt give me, I will offer tithes to Thee."\* Were this narrative found in the history of the Church, we should not hesitate to recognize it as an account of the consecration of a Catholic altar.

These passages, taken one with another, are sufficient to show that the idea of ceremonial religion was long anterior to the Jewish Law; and that what was principally done by that Law was to draw out this idea into a complete form, and to embody it in a multitude of special rules and prescriptions founded in the sanction of a Divine command. The number and variety of these ceremonial regulations are too well known to make

\* Gen. xxviii. 11, &c.

it necessary that I should here refer to them in any other than the most cursory manner; for no one surely questions that ceremonial religion was divinely sanctioned under the Mosaic Law, and that the ordinances of that Law were in full force at the coming of our Blessed Saviour.

But besides the strong presumption in favour of Ceremonial Religion arising from the fact of its having been once divinely instituted, and never abrogated by an equally binding authority, there are not wanting evidences, even under the Jewish Dispensation itself, to prove that, while the *form* which this external religion assumed under the Mosaic Law was necessarily local and temporary, the *principle* was of wider application and more enduring efficacy. The first proof which I shall adduce in favour of this statement is that most remarkable designation of Besaleel, son of Uri, who was appointed by the voice of God Himself to make the tabernacle and its sacred appurtenances. This Besaleel was chosen by God to the office of architect of the sacred structure in which His worship was to be conducted, and artificer of the vessels, vestments, incense, holy oil, and other materials which were to be employed in the service of the sanctuary. Observe, now, the words in which God designates him to these offices. "I have filled Besaleel, the son of Uri, with the *Spirit of God*, with wisdom and understanding and knowledge in all manner of work, to devise whatsoever may be artificially made of gold, and silver, and brass, and precious stones, and variety of wood."\* Surely, my brethren, this direct intervention of God's Holy Spirit in the fabrication of

\* Exod. xxxi. 1, 2, 3, &c.

the sacred apparatus of divine worship raises the whole idea of ceremonial religion above the level of a mere local and temporary institution, and points to the time when God was no longer to be worshipped in the Temple or on the mountain, but was to gather out of all nations the true adorers who should adore Him in spirit and in truth.\*

Nor, again, do I think that any one can read with attention such passages of the Old Testament as the prayers offered by David and Solomon respectively,—the first on the preparation of the materials for building the Temple, and the second on its completion—without discerning in them a spirit which is properly religious in such sense as not to be simply legal. These magnificent addresses, or portions of them, have received their rightful signification and position in the offices of the Catholic Church, especially those offices of almost unequalled splendour: the rites for the Consecration of Churches in the Missal, Breviary, and Pontifical. But look at these passages as they stand in your own Bibles, and tell me whether their meaning can possibly be effete under the Christian Dispensation. “Who am I,” says David, “and what is my people, that we should be able to promise Thee all these things? All things are Thine, and we have given Thee what we have received of Thy hand. *For we are sojourners before Thee, and strangers, as were all our fathers. Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and there is no stay.* O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee a house for Thy holy name is from

\* St. John, iv. 23.

Thy hand, and all things are Thine. I know, my God, that Thou provest hearts, and lovest simplicity, wherefore I also, in the simplicity of my heart, have joyfully offered all these things, and I have seen with great joy Thy people which are here present to offer Thee their offerings. O Lord God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep for ever this will of their heart, and *let this mind remain always for the worship of Thee.*"\*

But there are certain portions of the Old Testament, as every attentive reader of the Bible is aware, which form links of connection between the Legal and Evangelical Dispensations. Although belonging in date of composition to the times of the Law, they anticipate, not merely by prediction, but in tone and sentiment, the revelation of the Gospel; a fact which will not appear hard of explanation to any one who bears in mind that, although immediately the composition of human authors, these Books were really the work of the Holy Ghost, who spoke by those human instruments with the whole range and scope of God's purposes intimately present to Him. There is, accordingly, as you see, a great propriety in regarding the Bible in the way in which it is popularly regarded, *as a whole*; for all its parts are really connected, in that all-seeing and all-pervading Spirit who is its true Author. The Books, however, to which I particularly allude, as containing truths of paramount interest, are those of Proverbs, Wisdom, the Canticles, or Song of Solomon, the Book of Job, and, pre-eminently,

\* 1 Paralip. (P. V. Chron.) xxix. 14—18; compare also 3 (P. V. 1) Kings viii. 27, &c.

the Psalms of David. Such, again, are all the Prophecies, but especially the Books of the twelve Lesser Prophets. I will first say a few words about the Psalms of David. No one can doubt that this most beautiful series of prophetic hymns reaches on in its intention to Gospel times, who remembers how frequently both our Lord and the Apostles quote from it. This being so, it is surely a remarkable fact, that there is no one source from which the Catholic Church is able to draw such abundant materials in support of her view of ceremonial religion as the Psalms of David. Among the mass of Scripture teaching, which, in her magnificent office for the Consecration of Churches, she has "improved" to an evangelical and ecclesiastical use, the Psalms of David occupy the very foremost place. And I think it hardly possible that any candid person who reflects upon the zeal, or rather zest, with which the Royal Prophet expresses himself, under the dictation of the Holy Ghost, on matters affecting the House of God and His worship,\* can tamely submit to any interpretation of this wonderful book which attenuates all these expressions, under the Gospel, into mere historical records, or generalizes them into mere figures of speech. A word now of the Lesser Prophets. These surely deserve to share with Isaias, the epithet of "evangelical." Their works contain some of the most definite of all the predictions relative to our Saviour and His Church. Thus Micheas, who prophesied at the same time with Isaias, foretels the influx of the Gentiles into the Church;† Joel, the descent of the Holy Ghost;‡

\* Ps. lxxxiii. (P. V. lxxxiv.)

† Mich. iv. 2.

‡ Joe' ii. 28.

Aggeus, the glory of the second Temple;\* Zacharias, the Passion of Christ,† and, again, His entrance into Jerusalem “upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”‡ Indeed, it is evident that all the Lesser Prophets exhibit the Gospel Dispensation not as a new kingdom which was to be founded upon the ruins of the ancient dynasty, but as the continuation of the former polity in a renewed form. But we come at length to Malachias, the latest of the series, and the last of all the Prophets, who may be said not merely to have wound up the Old Dispensation, but to have heralded in the New. For, in his very last words, he, as it were, makes over his commission into the hands of St. John the Baptist, the immediate Forerunner of Christ. For he says, “Behold I will send you Elias the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.”§ Now hear what this last of the Prophets predicts concerning the future worship of Almighty God. “Who is there among you that will shut the doors, and kindle the fire on my altar gratis? I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. FOR FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN EVEN TO THE GOING DOWN, MY NAME IS GREAT AMONG THE GENTILES, AND IN EVERY PLACE THERE IS SACRIFICE, AND THERE IS OFFERED TO MY NAME A CLEAN OB-LATION: FOR MY NAME IS GREAT AMONG THE GENTILES, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.”|| I protest to you, my brethren, that I think these words are con-

\* Agg. ii. 10.            † Zach. xii. 10.            ‡ Ib. ix. 9.

§ Mal. iv. 6.            || Ib. i. 10, 11.

clusive of the whole question. As the last of the Prophets launches (so to say) the Law into the Gospel, he here predicts the true counterpart, in the Church, of the ceremonial and typical sacrifices of the older Dispensation. He speaks, indeed, in the present tense, "Sacrifice *is* offered;" but where among the heathen nations of his time shall we look for any "clean oblation" such as God could regard with complacency? The words are, evidently, not historical, but prophetic; and point to the time in which those sacrifices which had lost their savour with God should be replaced by the great Sacrifice of the Mass, the effectual and not merely commemorative representation, in the unbloody form, of the Sacrifice once for all offered on the Cross, which, "from the rising of the sun to its going down," even in every nation under heaven, should ascend to God in propitiation for the sins of the world.

And now, on opening the page of the New Testament, what do we find? Many severe animadversions of our Blessed Redeemer upon the abuses which had crept into the popular observance of the Ceremonial Law; many stirring exhortations on the all-absorbing necessity of inward religion; but of anathema on ceremonial religion in itself, not a single word. On the contrary; we find our Lord Himself, His Blessed Mother, and all those about Him, the most punctual observers of the Ceremonial Law as it then existed; Himself and His Mother complying with its prescriptions not of necessity but in condescension, and as acts of obedience. We find Him attending its great Feasts, vindicating the sanctity of God's House from all irreverent intruders,\* and

\* St. Matt. xxi. 13.



finally sanctioning, in express terms, the duties of external religion, while He insisted upon the superior importance of the inward.\* He chose as the "matter" of one of His Sacraments, water, which was already in ceremonial use among the Jews,† and He caused the institution of the Blessed Eucharist to arise directly out of the Jewish Passover, after having observed the Law in the fulness of its ceremonial enactments.‡ And He accepted in His own Person those acts of reverential homage and love which in His Church are paid to His Sacramental Presence; receiving, when an Infant, at the hands of the Wise Kings, both bodily homage and costly offerings, and thus attesting two of the great principles involved in our ceremonial religion; § allowing His disciples|| and the man He had cured of blindness to adore Him,¶ giving "virtue" to the pious woman who touched, in faith, the hem of His garment,\*\* and vindicating her who poured upon His head precious spikenard from an alabaster box, against those who, in the true spirit of Infidel philosophy, "murmured at the waste of what might have been given to the poor."†† And after the Soul had departed from

\* Ib. xxiii. 23.

† St. John, ii. 6.

‡ "In supremæ nocte cœnæ,  
Recumbens cum fratribus,  
*Observata lege plene*  
*Cibis in legalibus,*  
Cibum turbæ duodenæ,  
Se dat suis manibus."

*Hymn of the Church for Corpus Christi.*

§ St. Matt. ii. 11.

|| Ib. xxviii. 17.

¶ St. John, ix. 38.

\*\* St. Mark, v. 27, &c.; see also St. Luke, vi. 19; St. Matt. xxvi. 7; St. John, xii. 3.

†† St. Mark, xiv. 5; St. John, xii. 5.

His Adorable Body, He was still the object of a reverent ceremonial on the part of His faithful disciples, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, who "took the Body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury,"\* and of the pious female disciples who carried sweet spices to the Sepulchre.† The Catholic Church counts it most honourable to our Lord to carry out these texts to the very letter. When she appoints the narrative of the Epiphany, or of the cure of the Man blind from birth, to be read in the Gospel of the Mass, she prescribes a literal observance of the acts of devout adoration recorded in the history. There is also a strict Scripture precedent for our practice of striking the breast in token of compunction,‡ and an Apostolic injunction to warrant bowing at the name of Jesus, and bending the knee at the recital of the fact of His being made Man for us.§ Passing on now to the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, we cannot in reason expect to find any great evidence of ceremonial religion in the primitive and struggling condition of the Church of Christ to which that portion of the Sacred History relates. As well might we infer from the annals of the Catholic Church in England during the time of the Penal Laws that our religion makes no account of rites and ceremonies, as conclude that they had no place in the constitution of the Apostolic Church because little is said about them in the Apostolic history. At a time when the condition of the Church could be described as a state of "combats without and

\* St. John, xix. 38—40.

† St. Mark, xvi. 1.

‡ St. Luke, xxiii. 48.

§ Phil. ii. 9, 10.

fears within,"\* when Christians had to fight their way with imprisonment and death before their eyes, it can surprise no one to find that they were compelled to strip the external worship of God of everything but what was indispensably requisite for its decent and orderly conduct. But "decency and order" we know to have been secured by the power of an Apostolic injunction.† We know likewise, that the regulation of the Eucharistic ceremonial was a matter of special care to St. Paul,‡ and we may not doubt, considering the arguments by which that Apostle exhorts to reverence in the administration of the Most Holy Sacrament,§ that, when the primitive Christians met together "on the first day of the week"|| to break the Bread of Life, they celebrated that great Mystery with such reverential accompaniments as they could command from their scanty and precarious resources. The description of these Apostolic solemnities is not indeed so wholly unlike the circumstances of a "Midnight Mass," as we might be disposed to imagine. I will read it to you and leave you to draw your own inferences. "On the first day of the week when we were assembled to break bread, Paul discoursed . . . . and he continued his speech until midnight. And there were a great number of lamps in the upper chamber where we were assembled."¶ Now here we may observe that "to break bread" was evidently the *object* of the assembling; St. Paul's discourse, however protracted, did but, as it were, grow out of the occa-

\* 2 Cor. vii. 5.

† Ib. xi. 17, &c.

‡ St. John, xx. 19.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

§ Ib. verse 26, &c.

¶ Acts, xx. 7, et seq.

sion. But why this "number of lamps?" The circumstance is mentioned without any apparent reason. Why should these poor Christians go to the expense of an illumination, unless with some idea of doing honour to Christ who was there in the Blessed Sacrament?

And now, in our travels through Scripture, we arrive at length at the Book of the Apocalypse, which, as you know, is not historical, but part vision and part prophecy. In both characters, however, it makes strongly for our point. The blessed Apostle whose personal revelations it records was admitted to a sight of the worship of Heaven. "He beheld a Lamb as it were slain, before whom, when he had opened the Book, the four living creatures and twenty ancients fell down, having every one of them harps, and golden vials, full of odours, which are the prayers of Saints. And they sang a new Canticle, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the Book and to open the seals thereof; because Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God in Thy Blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."\* This is the ceremonial of Heaven. But, as the blessed Apostle saw the worship of Heaven in an ecstasy, he saw also, by prophetic anticipation, the future glories of the Church on earth. "I, John, saw the heavenly City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as *a bride adorned for her husband*.....And the foundations of the walls of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones."† And then the Apostle goes on to give the most gorgeous description of its magnificence. And yet, splendid as was the exterior appearance

\* Apoc. v. 8, &c.

† Ib. xxi. 2, &c.

of the new Jerusalem, with its foundations of precious stones, its gates of pearl, and its floor of glassy gold,\* these were not to be its principal and characteristic glories. For it had no (proper) "temple,"† like Jerusalem of old, seeing that "the Lord God Almighty is its Temple, and the Lamb." Its gates are "never shut by day," so that the glory and honour of the nations may flow into it;‡ and at night the Lamb is its "Lamp," making the darkness as bright as the noon-day light.§ The heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, as foreseen by the Apostle in its normal splendour, is to eclipse its predecessor in exterior magnificence, but to surpass it infinitely more, in that God's Presence is not here, as of old, to be merely adumbrated, but to dwell by Personal Inhabitation. We, my brethren, cannot command the gold, and the pearls, and the precious stones. We must aim but at Mary's benediction, by "doing what we can;"|| but God is in the midst of us, while the sweet light before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament is a pledge to you that the Lamp of the Lamb is never absent from the city of your peace, whether by day or by night.

But the earthly Jerusalem, while it images the glory of its heavenly counterpart and original, is to represent, as far as it can be represented on earth, the ceremonial of the angelic worship. And will the Lamb that was slain, indeed vouchsafe to manifest Himself on an earthly throne, and allow us to school ourselves, during this our banishment, in the duties of the celestial service? Wait, my

\* Apoc. ver. 20, 21.

† Ib. ver. 22.

‡ Ib. ver. 24, 25.

§ Ps. cxlviii. (P. V. cxlix.) 12.

|| St. Mark, xiv. 8.

brethren, but a few moments longer, and you will see. It is even so. The Immaculate Lamb of God will deign to commit Himself to human hands, and by them He will be elevated in your sight, as on a throne of dignity, and there challenge your homage and your love. Incense will mount up to Him, and music will celebrate His praise. His ministers who wait about His throne, and His people in lowly adoration, will fall down before Him. But their praises, unlike those which ascend to Him in His heavenly court, are mingled with prayers for help. And this is their burden. "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord! O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord! O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us!" Yes, my brethren; the nearest approach which earth can make to the ceremonial of heaven is to be found in the Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament.

1

## DISCOURSE X.

## INWARD RELIGION THE ONE THING NECESSARY.

It may be objected to the argument of the last Discourse, that, even if satisfactory, it is merely one-sided; and, moreover, that it exhibits a side of Scripture, which, granting it to exist, is at any rate not the uppermost. It may be urged, that although the Bible, taken as a whole, does unquestionably reveal to the eye of candid and accurate observation a running testimony to the duty and necessity of external religion, still that the fact has to be got over of a strong anti-ceremonial bias in the teaching of our Saviour Himself. One quotation will be sufficient to suggest the nature of this objection, which might of course be supported by many other passages of the same tenour:—"Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness. Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness."\* Such passages, it might be added, acquire all the greater force from the fact of their being counterbalanced in our Lord's teaching by no equally strong exhortations

\* St. Matt. xxiii. 25, 27.



the other way ; so that the reader of the Bible is left under the impression that, in the judgment of Truth itself, external religion has a natural tendency to take the place of internal, by reconciling its votaries to the neglect of those duties of the inward life, which, while they are infinitely more difficult than any outward observances, and have far fewer inducements of a worldly kind to encourage them, are not only more important than such observances, but possess a claim upon the Christian's regard which absolutely defies comparison with any other.

In this objection there is at all events sufficient force to entitle it to a distinct notice and a formal reply in any attempt to harmonize the Catholic Church with the letter of the Holy Scriptures. For there can be no doubt that a teacher, could such a one be even supposed, who should so represent the duty of external religion as to imply less than that "inward religion is the one thing necessary" to salvation, might be confronted with the Bible at every turn, or rather, would not be so much met as overwhelmed by its testimony against such a position. The present Discourse shall be directed to prove that at any rate the Catholic Church is no such teacher ; on the contrary, that she can adopt without the least hesitation or inconsistency the very strongest of the passages which can be produced from Holy Scripture against the sufficiency of external religion, or in admonition of its dangers ; that, if it be part of her doctrine (as was shown in the last Discourse) to maintain outward religion as an institution necessary, in a world like our own, to the due reverence of the Creator, and most valuable in its influences upon the soul of man,

it is equally a part of that doctrine to teach that outward religion is worthless as the husks which are thrown to the swine, except in so far as it conduces to the sanctification of the heart and affections; and that there is absolutely nothing in the requirements of the Catholic Church which is essential, in such way as to be indispensable, except faith and the love of God. To sum up in brief the objects of the last and present Discourses; the last was meant to prove that Holy Scripture is not opposed to outward religion; this, that the Catholic Church is zealous for the inward.

But to speak first of what may be termed the strong anti-ceremonial passages in our Lord's teaching. Let it be considered whether these are not sufficiently accounted for by the circumstances of the case and of the times, without in any way affecting the present argument. Supposing (which is unquestionable) that outward religion *has* a real tendency to encroach upon the province of inward—first, as being much easier; secondly, as being favoured (if so be) by human inducements—is it not precisely what we should have expected, that a teacher, addressing persons *under a highly ceremonial system*, would direct his instructions very principally to this topic, that God looks to the heart, and not to the outward appearance? More especially if such teacher knew, by whatever means, that in the case of the people he addressed this danger had developed into a real, extensive, and most ruinous evil, would he be proved to discountenance the *use* of outward religion by the fact of his dwelling largely upon its abuses?

In asking you to try and realize the former of these suppositions, I am not proposing a mere

theory, but suggesting what is proved by actual experience. I will read to you a passage which occurs in the genuine works of a certain religious author; and before I tell you whose it is, I will ask you to exercise a little ingenuity in guessing its probable origin. A certain writer, addressing the Pope of the time, exclaims—"Answer me; art thou a successor of Peter, or of some other? Of Peter, thou repliest. But Peter went not forth into public adorned with silks and gold. He rode not on a milk-white steed, surrounded by a troop of soldiers, with attendants sounding his praises as he went along. He deemed not such accessories necessary to the discharge of his saving commission—"If thou love Me, feed My sheep." In these things, O Pope, thou art Constantine's, not Peter's successor."\* The same writer elsewhere says (addressing a Bishop)—"It is not the splendour of vestments, nor the pomp of equipage, nor the amplitude of a palace, which ministers to true honour, but the ornament of irreproachable morality, spiritual study, and all good works. Many a priest is careful about vestments who is little, if at all, given to virtue. O that they would seek rather to glory in the duties of their vocation, than in the labours of the weaver or the furrier!" Now answer me, my Protestant hearers: Whence can I have derived these words of solemn warning, if not indignant remonstrance? Is it not, must it not be, from the sermon of some Puritan in the days of Elizabeth or Cromwell? No, my friends; the words are those of a Doctor and Saint of the Catholic Church. Their author was canonized by one successor of the Pontiff whom he so solemnly admonishes, and declared a

\* St. Bernard, *De Consid.* lib. iv. c. iii.

Doctor—that is, a theological luminary of the Church—by another. Stronger words than he uses against ecclesiastical pomp and pageantry, it would be scarcely possible to imagine. Yet it is certain that he had no intention of denying the due use of external ornament even in the personal equipage and establishment of Popes or Bishops, much less in the ceremonial of the Church. This is plain, both because the eminent sanction given by the Church to his writings (and these among the rest) sufficiently proves that in her deliberate judgment his words bore no such construction; and because he himself sufficiently explains his own meaning in the passages I have quoted, by saying—“My counsel to you is, then, to look upon” (the external attributes of your office) “as a burden to be endured for a season, rather than as a duty to be aimed at as of obligation. To those things I would *rather* invite you which come to you as a positive debt to be discharged. *Walk then in purple, walk in gold, but, heir as you are of the Pastor, shrink not from the Pastor’s work,*” &c.\* My brethren, how precisely does this line of teaching correspond with that of our Saviour, who, after having warned the Pharisees against the dangers of formalism, adds—“These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone.”†

But, again, it may be said, the Four Gospels contain few positive recognitions of ceremonial religion. If by this it be meant that they contain few recognitions in the way of precept, this indeed is true, but easily explicable. But if that they contain few recognitions in the way of example,

\* St. Bernard, De Offic. Episcoporum, c. ii.

† St. Matt. xxiii. 23.

this is not true; because, as was shown in the last Discourse, our Saviour gave His sanction to the ceremonial ordinances of the Law by His own punctual observance of them. But that our Lord would not be likely to enforce the importance of ceremonial religion by many positive precepts is evident, since the danger in His time (and, we may add, in most times) is all in the opposite direction. It is the same in the Catholic Church. The sermons and practical treatises which constitute her spiritual literature (as the words of our Lord and the Apostles may be said to form that of Biblical Christianity) will be found to consist almost entirely of precepts and persuasives to the practise of *inward* religion, or of outward religion only so far as it tends to inward, or implies it. External religion is at all times sufficiently recognised in the Catholic Church by the mere fact of its being instituted and maintained, and the power of religious exhortation is accordingly directed rather to the avoidance of its abuses than to the vindication of its use.

Having thus cleared the argument of the present Discourse from any disadvantage which it might seem to labour under on account of the *primâ facie* evidence of the Bible, we will now proceed to introduce it.

Yet here also there is a preliminary prejudice to be removed. It is said, not only that the *primâ facie* aspect of the Bible is anti-ceremonial, but that the *primâ facie* appearance of the Catholic Church is anti-spiritual. The former objection having been disposed of, a sentence or two will suffice, as I trust, to obviate the effect of the latter. To say that the "first blush" of the Catholic Church is rather ceremonial than

spiritual, is little more than to enunciate a truism. Ceremonial religion being essentially external, and spiritual religion essentially not merely internal, but of a retiring nature, to say that the surface of the Church is ceremonial and not spiritual, is but to say that the Church wears that particular aspect which she must needs wear, being what she is. It is therefore most unreasonable for those who must *necessarily* be conversant with the mere outside of the Catholic Church to form any abrupt conclusions with respect to her views about the relative importance of outward and inward religion. Although, therefore, the conclusion which attributes to us as much neglect of inward religion as we manifest attention to outward, is undoubtedly precipitate, and moreover utterly unfounded, it arises, no doubt, in part from the nature of the case, rather than from the fault of the reasoner. Perhaps you have never considered the subject enough to see, what now perhaps you observe, that strangers to our religion must necessarily be far better judges of our outside appearance than of our inward spirit. And it is with the view of removing additional obstacles to a correct estimate of the Catholic Church, in this respect, that I propose, in this Discourse, to tell you what perhaps all of you do not know, concerning our *doctrine*, in regard to the necessity, above all things, of inward religion, as well as concerning the great pains which the Catholic Church takes to impress her children with a due sense of this necessity.

The subject naturally divides itself into two parts. It must be shown—first, that the Catholic Church guards against a merely formal and superstitious use of outward religion, both by her

authorized teaching on the subject and by every possible safeguard which she can employ against its abuse; and, secondly, that outward religion (with the exception, of course, of the Sacraments, which are essentially sanctifying ordinances) forms but a part, and by no means the chief part, of the Church's provision for the due maintenance of man's personal relations with his Creator. And, lastly, that the case is quite possible in which even the Sacraments themselves might have to be dispensed with, while the case is impossible in which a Catholic would be released from the duty of inward religion.

To begin with our authorized teaching on the Sacraments, a point of our doctrine more subject to misrepresentation than, perhaps, almost any other of equal importance. Our supposed doctrine upon the Sacraments is popularly expressed by a phrase which has a true meaning, but is commonly understood in quite an untrue sense. This phrase is, that the Sacraments have the power of conferring grace "*ex opere operato*." The popular interpretation of this theological form of expression represents us as saying that the mere reception of the Sacraments is a way of obtaining the saving grace annexed to them, independently altogether of the disposition in which they are received. The Catholic Church teaches a doctrine the direct contrary to this. She says, not only that the Sacraments convey no saving grace to the unworthy receiver, but that the fact of receiving them in mortal sin, is an additional mortal sin of a peculiarly aggravated character; and that, on the other hand, the fruit of the Sacraments is capable of being indefinitely increased in proportion as they are received with a

greater devotion and preparation of heart. It is quite true that the Sacraments, unlike all other religious ordinances, give grace "*ex opere operato*;" that is (as was explained in the Seventh Discourse), in virtue of a power lodged in them by the institution of Christ. But it is this very distinction of the true and proper Sacraments which aggravates the guilt of receiving them unworthily, and therefore increases the responsibility to receive them aright. The unworthy reception of a Sacrament involves the peculiar sin of *sacrilege*, as distinguished from any other sort of irreverence or presumption; because, since they actually contain a divine virtue as vehicles, and do not merely pledge it as earnest, or involve it as conditions, the deliberate contempt of them can never be less than an act of despite to the Spirit of God, and in one instance, to the Person of Christ. The Church teaches accordingly, that purity of conscience and (where practicable) formal preparation are necessary towards the worthy reception of the Sacraments. In the case, indeed, of Infant Baptism, the former of these conditions is implied in the absence of any moral impediment, and the latter is impossible from the nature of the case. But where Baptism is conferred on adults, the Church requires (in the words of the Divines of Trent) that "a different method be observed. To them the Christian faith must be proposed, and they must be urged, invited, and attracted, by every means which zeal can suggest, to embrace it. Yet it is the custom of the Church not to impart Baptism to adults at once, but to delay it for a certain period, and this (1) in order that their motive in seeking Baptism may be cleared of all suspicion; and (2) that they may be



instructed more perfectly in the duties and practice of their religion.”\*

The Formulary of faith and practice from which the above passage is extracted (the Catechism of Trent) constitutes the basis and standard of all parochial instruction in the Catholic Church, and I cannot do better than quote as much of its teaching on the subject of the different Sacraments as may serve to show you how carefully the doctrine of the “*opus operatum*” is guarded against any possible misconstruction.

2. The next of the Seven Sacraments is Confirmation. “Such adults” (says the Catechism) “as are admitted to Confirmation, *if, that is, they desire to receive its grace and gifts*, must grieve, from the bottom of their hearts, for all graver sins they may have committed. Care must be taken by their pastors that they confess their sins before they approach to receive this Sacrament.”† It is accordingly the practice of our parish priests, as many of you are aware, to prepare candidates for Confirmation by a course of preliminary teaching, and to dispose such as are about to be confirmed to the due reception of the Sacrament by all means at their command.

3. The Blessed Eucharist.—The Catholic Church teaches, that while the Blessed Eucharist is received “unto condemnation” by such as presume to partake of it in mortal sin, its benefits admit of indefinite increase according to the degree of pious preparation by which the reception of it is preceded, and of the fervent affection with which that reception is accompanied. The Catechism says:—

\* Catech. Trid. p. ii. § xxxviii. De Baptismo.

† Ib. § xvi. De Confirm.

"The Faithful are to understand that in like manner as, on receiving the Eucharist with a mind excellently well affected and prepared, the most abundant treasures of heavenly grace do accrue, so, contrariwise, he who receives it unpreparedly, not only derives no benefit, but rather sustains the most grievous spiritual hinderance. For to every best thing it appertains to bring greatest benediction when used aright, and most terrible perdition when abused. Let no one therefore marvel if those more excellent gifts of God, which, when received with a mind rightly disposed, are of the greatest assistance in the pursuit of heavenly glory, are the cause of never-ending death to such as show themselves unworthy of them." The Catechism proceeds to specify the five following constituents of a worthy communion:—1. A right "discernment" of Christ's True Body in the Sacrament; 2. Brotherly love and the spirit of Christian forgiveness; 3. A pure conscience secured by previous sacramental confession; 4. Sense of unworthiness; 5. The spirit of St. Peter's words—"Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."\*

4. Penance.—It is upon the subject of the Sacrament of Penance that the greatest misconception of our doctrine prevails. The Sacrament of Penance is generally supposed, out of the Catholic Church, to consist but of one act on the part of the penitent, and one on the part of the priest, both of them external. It is imagined that the penitent makes confession, and that absolution follows as a matter of course. Now the Church teaches, that the only *indispensable* condition of pardon is an inward disposition, and

\* De Euchar. §§ lix. lx.

not an outward act. And no confession, however complete, will stand the penitent in the stead of such inward disposition, which must be, at the very least, a "godly sorrow" for all sin committed in time past, accompanied by a firm and effective purpose of avoiding sin in time to come. The doctrine of the Church on this subject is perfectly distinct, and well understood by her members, and it is this—that where such godly sorrow appears to be wanting, not only is the priest bound to withhold absolution, but even were he to be deceived by the penitent into giving it, such absolution would be worse than null and void, inasmuch as it would not only leave the penitent without the grace of pardon, but aggravate his guilt, so far as he had obtained it by any wilful dissimulation of sin or simulation of unreal sorrow.

On the subject of Contrition the Catechism of Trent says:—"The Faithful must be warned against judging of Contrition by the test of the bodily senses; it is *an act of the will*." Again: "The Faithful will understand that Contrition lies not in merely ceasing to sin, or proposing to enter upon a new kind of life, or having already entered upon it" (as, for instance, were they to suppose that honourable marriage is a sufficient set-off against the sins of youth), "but that, before all else, there must be conceived a detestation of the ill-spent life, and all possible reparation made for it." Further on the Catechism enumerates the requirements towards a true contrition, which are: 1. To hate and grieve over *all* our sins; 2. To join with this sorrow and detestation the purpose of confessing sin and making satisfaction for it; 3. To form a true, firm, and effective determination

of amending our lives; 4. To forgive from the heart all who have anywise injured us.”\* Now Contrition, where it involves a detestation of sin, and a hearty sorrow for it, on the simple motive of loving God above all things as He is in Himself, and not merely for our own sakes, will, according to Catholic doctrine, ensure pardon of sin, even without the Sacrament of Penance, where that Sacrament is desired and cannot be had. And such an approach to this perfect Contrition as implies, at the least, sorrow for sin from a supernatural, and not a merely human and worldly motive, together with a firm purpose of avoiding it and its occasions for the future, is an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance, the absence of which invalidates and nullifies that Sacrament (however complete in every other particular), as entirely as Baptism, for instance, would be nullified by the use of another material than water, or of other words than those which our Lord has appointed to be the Form wherein that Sacrament shall be administered.

Upon the necessity of preparation towards the due reception of the remaining three Sacraments, the Council is equally urgent.

5. On Extreme Unction it says: “It is a thing worthy of all pains to guard against any hinderance to the grace of this sacrament. And since nothing would so prejudice its effect as the consciousness of any mortal sin, the constant practice of the Catholic Church must be observed and the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist received before Extreme Unction. Parish priests should likewise urge the sick to receive the Holy Unction with the same faith which animated the early

\* De Pœnitentia, § xxx.

disciples on presenting themselves to receive cures at the hands of the Apostles.”\*

6, 7. On Holy Order and Matrimony I need say no more than that both of these Sacraments must be preceded by a worthy reception of that of Penance. The strict and prolonged discipline required in our seminaries (of which hereafter) is the best security against a profanation of the Sacrament of Order. The regulations, moreover, of our ecclesiastical colleges require that none of the Orders of the Church shall be received without a previous Retreat of some days; and it is far from uncommon with pious Catholics to prepare themselves, on both sides, for entering into the holy state of Marriage by spending the few previous days in some Convent or Religious house, and there putting themselves specially into God's presence in meditation and the exercises of devotion, under the direction of some experienced Confessor.

While the Catholic Church thus provides every possible safeguard against an unworthy, or merely formal reception of her sacraments, she offers helps towards inward religion absolutely peculiar to herself. Consider, for instance, the great stress which all our spiritual writers lay upon the practice of Meditation. Unless we adopt some habitual method of making eternal truths present to the mind as a counterpoise to the influence of perishable objects, it is certain that we shall be in imminent danger of “walking by sight and not by faith,” and may be left at last with no resource but this miserable world in which we have chosen our portion. This is an obvious truth which the Catholic Church seeks to make practical. You find, indeed, out of her pale admirable

\* De Extrema Unctione, § xxiii.

sentiments to the same effect; but it is under her guidance alone that you have a machinery organized with the most consummate wisdom for securing the end in view. The same is true of that wonderful provision against the allurements of evil to which I have already referred, periodical retirement from the world, and the making what are called Spiritual Retreats. All our Priests, and many members of the Laity, are in the regular practice of withdrawing at times from their duties in the world to give themselves up to special prayer for Divine guidance and meditation upon eternal truths. The End for which we were created, the evil and ingratitude of sin, the certainty of death and judgment; these, and the like matters of intimate personal concern, are brought before the mind with the aids of silence and other external helps; and then, in succession, the various affecting Mysteries of the Gospel, as opening a world of light and consolation to the soul penetrated with a sense of its own misery and helplessness. Here again you have an institution to which there is nothing at all parallel in any of the religious systems which surround you. Where, too, will you look for any mode of education for the Sacred Ministry which furnishes such a guarantee for the devotion of the Clergy to their high mission as is presented in the arrangement of our Ecclesiastical Seminaries? Between one and two hours of every morning regularly devoted to meditation, private prayer, and public acts of worship; study directed exclusively to the objects of the sacred vocation; appointed times in each day for silence; meals accompanied with the reading of spiritual or instructive books; conversation guarded by salutary restraints; recreation directed to the

glory of God. Behold the constituents of a Catholic priest's education during the years preceding his entrance upon his sacred duties. Then from the Seminary pass to the Religious Noviciate; and there you will see the same essentials of holy training, accompanied with a yet more entire consecration of self to the cause and service of God. Will you say that ministers of religion, or soldiers of the Cross, thus disciplined for their work, are likely to be otherwise than keenly alive, whether in their own case or that of others, to the dangers of a merely formal Christianity?

I must ask you, likewise, to refer to the Fifth of these Discourses in which I spoke of the Confessional as a safeguard of Christian obedience. The point of view in which I contrasted it with all merely human checks upon the liberty of the will, was especially in its tendency to secure the habitual control of thought. You say, and rightly, that Christianity is a religion of the heart and affections. But I ask you, then, what guarantees for the regulation of the heart and affections you find out of the Catholic Church, at all comparable with those she provides? A Catholic, as I before said, has, in the ordinance of Confession, a constant monitor of his frailty, and a memento that God sees his heart, and that he must regulate it as in God's sight if he hope for a favourable sentence at the Day of Judgment. If such a one act up to his religion (and if otherwise then do not, I pray you, blame his religion for his failures) is it possible that he should trust for his salvation to mere forms? Consider the process of a Confession: First, accurate self-examination; next, a "godly sorrow" for sin; next, a frank, detailed, and self-accusing, acknowledgment of it, with a

firm and effectual purpose of amendment. Certainly, if anything can keep the heart right with God, it is such an institution as this.

And do you not find that Catholics, as a body, after all that is said against them, are scrupulous upon a number of points which others overlook? Ask yourselves fairly, and say, whether one reason why you are so apt to criticize them severely is not that, unconsciously, and as if by instinct, *you measure them by a higher standard than you apply to others?* In this respect your practice is at variance with your profession.

But the care which the Catholic Church employs towards the cultivation of inward and spiritual religion does not end with the Confessional. Confession, indeed, (rightly made) is a remedy against sin, but another process is required towards growth in holiness. Here, too, the Catholic Church is ready with her prescriptions. The progressive formation of the spiritual character is, with her, not a matter of haphazard or mere experiment. It is the subject of a distinct science, called Ascetics. The conclusions of this science are applied to the case of individuals in the way of Spiritual Direction, which is the appointed counterpoise to the dangers of a mere general religion, by consulting for the case of individuals, according to the infinite diversities of human character. It just does in spiritual medicine what is effected in the case of the bodily health by the personal treatment of the physician, as superadded to the instruction of books or lectures on medical subjects. And it relates to that especial department of medicine which regards the treatment of the convalescent, rather than of the mortally diseased.

Consider, once more, the estimate taken



Catholics and non-Catholics respectively of moral virtues, and see which of the two betokens the greater regard to inward religion. I will choose England and Ireland as instances in point, although with no desire of instituting an invidious comparison, as the sequel will show. But, speaking on the whole, it is certain that some moral qualities are prized in England, in which the Irish are, as a nation, deficient. On the other hand, the Irish are generally admitted to excel the English in other virtues of a very different stamp, and such as peculiarly deserve the name of "evangelical." If you look attentively at these several classes of moral qualities, you will find that those most highly appreciated in Protestant England are the virtues which relate to our fellow-men; those in which Catholic Ireland shines are virtues which relate directly to God.\* The Catholic Irish are less industrious, for instance, than the English, far less so than the Scotch; but they are more patient under calamity. Again, they are naturally less given to strict truth-telling than the English, while they are most remarkable, on the other hand, for the virtue of chastity.† I do not under-rate industry, far less truthfulness, and the Catholic religion tends to make men both industrious and truthful. But it remains certain that the effect of the Catholic Church, *pro tanto*, is to raise the

\* See Dr. Newman's Lectures on Anglican Difficulties, Lecture VIII.

† See a very important testimony on this subject, in a speech of Sir George Grey at the beginning of the Parliamentary Session in February, 1857, with regard to the character of Irish female prisoners as compared with the same class in England. See, also, an article in the *Dublin Review*, of January, 1857, on "The Irish in England."

standard of those Christian virtues which, like purity, faith, and self-denial, concern man in his relation to God rather than in his relation to society. If to this you reply, that Ireland is an honourable exception, in these points, to some other Catholic nations, I rejoin that I do not know enough of all the facts of the case, either to deny or admit your statement. But it is sufficient for my purpose that any single nation can be produced, at once conspicuously Catholic and conspicuously chaste. For of this I am quite certain, that, even if there be Catholic nations deficient in that great virtue (which, if true, may prove no more than that Catholics in those nations have more faith than love), there is absolutely no Protestant country in the world in which, as a country, chastity receives any just recognition at all. And, indeed, nothing which you could establish (for, as to rumours and impressions, I do not care for them) against any Catholic country in the world could hinder its being certain that our religion *tends* to purity in a way quite peculiar to itself. In proof, I need but mention its estimate of celibacy, its doctrine on the indissolubility of marriage, and that very minuteness of instruction on the subject of the Sixth\* Commandment which some of your authorities are such good Protestants, and such bad philosophers, as to charge with tendencies unfavourable to this great virtue; as if, forsooth, the diagnosis of symptoms were no part of medical science, upon any view of that science which could possibly be turned to a practical account!

Language, again, is a most unsuspecting criterion of character. Now, I would instance the

\* In the Protestant order, the Seventh.

several senses of the words "prudence," and, again, "charity," among Catholics and Protestants respectively, as evidence that they measure things by wholly different rules, and that ours is the rule which implies the greater amount of inward religion. I am certain that "prudence" is a word which does not naturally bear among Catholics that simple reference to money-making, and money-keeping, which the very mention of the quality suggests to an Englishman, as such. "Charity," too, is another remarkable instance in point. In the Catholic sense, charity is synonymous with all Christian virtue, because it implies that love of God and of our neighbour, for His sake, which, according to our Lord, is the sum and substance of the Christian Law. But, to one not a Catholic, this noble word never, as a general rule, suggests the idea, at best, of anything more than brotherly love, while it has been vulgarized amongst us into a mere synonyme for almsgiving. I might instance also the theological sense of the word "justice," as another case in point. The meaning which this word bears in our version of the Bible, and in our books of instruction and devotion, as synonymous with universal virtue, is so entirely lost, out of the Catholic Church, in the more popular and restricted sense of the word, as to render that use of it almost unintelligible except to Catholics. Shall I add yet another instance scarcely less in point? How hard is it to realize those interior dispositions which our Divine Redeemer includes in the idea of Poverty (upon which He has pronounced His first beatitude) in that most heartless of terms, "pauper," which is the English Protestant phrase for "poor!" I am not here speaking of the distinction between

the Catholic and Protestant estimate of the *state* of poverty (a most fertile subject indeed of testimony to the "evangelical" notes of the Catholic Church), but merely touching upon the contrast in reference to the subject of inward religion. What our Blessed Lord referred to in pronouncing a benediction upon the Poor (as is evident from a comparison of the two passages in which it occurs\*) was a certain inward disposition, favoured, though of course not secured, by the absence of wealth and other such inducements to creature-love. Now, it is not too much to say that the very notion of any such attribute of the state of poverty has been wholly lost under Protestant regulations and influences, while it is equally certain that the same notion lives and flourishes under the protection of that Catholic Church which, in raising Poverty to the rank of an especial privilege, and making it an object of choice, in the Religious State, has for ever rescued it from that sordid estimate and degraded position which it receives in countries where the rule of the Catholic Church is not publicly recognized.

But why do I occupy your time in proving anything so self-evident to every one who knows the Catholic Church, as that she treats inward religion as "the one thing necessary"? Look, I do not say at the streams, but at the floods, of practical and devotional literature which she has poured upon the world from the first ages to the present, and at no time more copiously than during these latter centuries. What have you, my non-Catholic hearers, to compare with those volumes, or rather those libraries, of saintly science? Of spiritual

\* St. Matt. v. 3 ; St. Luke, vi. 20.

and pious works which have survived their first publication, how many can you name as in circulation and in use among yourselves? But, as to Catholic works of this kind, the time would fail me if I were even to attempt an enumeration of the very principal of them. In truth, we have here your own testimony on our side. For, a few years ago, when many good men among yourselves became sensible of the wants of Protestants in this department of religion, they had no resource but to borrow, by wholesale, from the Catholic Church. They translated, they selected, they adapted; yet it is no exaggeration to say that stores of such literature exist in the Catholic Church equally precious with that which they brought out, and that even Catholics, who imagine themselves to have arrived at the end of such resources, are constantly making new discoveries in this almost inexhaustible mine of spiritual treasure. Never, again, therefore, as you would escape the reproach of conscious misrepresentation, speak or think of the Catholic Church as the advocate of a merely formal religion! All her laws, institutions, ceremonies, sacraments, tend but in one direction—to promote the love of God. To excite this love in the sinner, and to educate it in the saint, this is her great, and, in a certain sense, her only aim. It is possible to conceive of her in circumstances where she might be stripped of every visible token, and debarred from the use of even her greatest and most necessary Sacraments. When St. Francis Xavier was cast, in hopeless disease, upon the sands of Sancian, where then was the Catholic Church in regard of that her highly favoured son? No Priest, no Mass, no Confessional, no Blessed Sacrament! Had the

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Church then perished in his regard? Ah no! She was most intimately present. I said that every visible sign of religion was absent. I forgot; there was one. St. Francis had retained his crucifix; but, even had that too been lost, his heart, raised to heavenly contemplations, could have supplied its place by an effort of its own. St. Francis Xavier, as we read in his biography, had two only visible helps to religion in the hour of his death,—his crucifix at his side, and the open sky above his head. He looked up to heaven and thought that God was there; and then he turned to his crucifix, and remembered that He had died for him.

“The saint’s distemper,” it is related, “accompanied with an acute pain in his side, and a great oppression, increased daily; he was twice blooded, but the unskilful surgeon both times pricked the tendon, by which accident the patient fell into swooning convulsions. His disease was attended with a horrible nausea, insomuch that he could take no nourishment. But his countenance was always serene, and his soul enjoyed a perpetual calm. Sometimes he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and at others fixed them on his crucifix, entertaining divine communications with his God, in which he shed abundance of tears. At last, on the 2nd of December, which fell on Friday, having his eyes all bathed in tears, and fixed with great tenderness of soul on his crucifix, he pronounced these words: ‘In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped, I shall not be confounded for ever;’ and, at the same instant, transpierced with celestial joy, which appeared upon his countenance, he sweetly gave up the ghost.”\*

\* Butler’s Lives of the Saints, (Dec. 3.)

You see, therefore, that the Catholic Church, if need be, can, without the slightest prejudice to her office, adopt in their full import the words of her Lord: "Behold the kingdom of God is *within* you."\* Not only does she stand forth prominently and conspicuously as a teacher of spiritual religion, but the cultivation of the inward life of holiness is so signally her own especial attribute, as to become, in fact, her characteristic in comparison with, not to say in contrast from, every professing form of Christianity in the world.

\* St. Luke, xvii. 21.

## DISCOURSE XI.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THE HEIR TO THE  
REPROACH OF CHRIST.

Nothing is more apt to strike Catholics with wonder, and tempt them to chagrin, than the misapprehensions and misrepresentations to which they and their religion are continually subjected. Of their religion they know that it is pure and peaceable, and of themselves they feel that their only true misfortune and very real fault is, that they so poorly fulfil what it requires of them, and so imperfectly correspond with the privileges it offers. But in the account often given of their Church and of themselves, as its members, they behold a picture which alternately provokes their ridicule, and rouses their indignation. They find the religion whose pacific and sanctifying qualities they know so well, set forth as a system of fraud and iniquity, the enemy of good faith, sound morals, civil liberty, legitimate government, and social order; and of themselves they learn, to their amazement, that the world is apt to think well of them in proportion, not as they act up to their profession as Catholics, but as they are ashamed of it. They are quite at a loss to account for such strange and utterly groundless misapprehensions; and they regard their own



case as without parallel in the history of mankind.

The wise King Solomon has a saying which is calculated to dispel the notion that any case of this kind is likely to be unprecedented. "What is it," asks he, "that hath been? The same thing that shall be. What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done. Nothing under the sun is new; neither is any man able to say, Behold, this is new: for it hath already gone before in the ages that were before us."\* The rule which the wise King here lays down goes a great way to explain the fact in question. The inspired preacher tells us, that what is true in the order of nature is true also in the moral and spiritual world; namely, that events are apt to come round in cycles; and that there are few appearances in the aspects of society, any more than on the face of the sky, so strange and startling as not to have had their precedents, or to be likely to have their recurrences.

The misapprehensions to which we have just alluded are so manifold, and present, at first sight, so little appearance of distinctness or consistency, that it may be thought impossible to draw out from them any tangible subject of consideration, or to refer them to any definite standard. The peculiarity of the Catholic religion, among all objects of human criticism, is, that it is in each several instance that which the objector happens, most of all things, to dislike. It is a giant bugbear, which has the faculty of transforming itself into a thousand shapes as reflected on the retinas of a thousand different eyes. It has one side of

\* Eccl. i. 9, 10.

odiousness to the statesman, another to the civil governor, another to the man of business, another to the man of the world, another to the family-man, another to the profligate, another to the rigorist. Some dislike one of its doctrines, some another, while some object to all alike. There is also a large class of persons who have no definite idea about the Catholic religion at all, but abhor it merely because it is unpopular. It must be wrong, they say, or it could not be so generally hated. Now, is it possible to reduce this mass of objections to shape, to bring them to any single point of view, or to arrange them under any general heads? Let us, at least, make the attempt.

We may put aside, in the first place, such objections to the Catholic religion as turn upon the question of its theological statements; for these are not, after all, at the bottom of the popular antipathy to it. Neither have we to embarrass ourselves with those which would be pretty generally admitted to fall under the denomination of vulgar errors: such as are the notions, for instance, that Catholics are given to plots and conspiracies; that absolution is to be purchased by money; that monasteries and convents are houses of detention; that religious obedience binds its subjects to commit actual sin at the bidding of a Superior; and many other popular delusions about us, which, it may be hoped, are fast dying out, but which, at any rate, are beyond the possibility of contradiction, since those who believe them would never believe us. Yet there still remains, after every process of exhaustion which we can apply to the subject, a formidable residue of public feeling against us,

which, when presented to you, I believe you will recognize as no unfair representation of the English mind, so far as that mind is capable of being fathomed in our regard. Is it not, then, true, that the most plausible objections to the Catholic religion may be ultimately referred to one or other of the following classes? It is extensively felt, as I think, either (1) that our principles of morality are lax; or (2) that our modes of inculcating them are indirect and disingenuous; or (3) that our religion tends to the disruption of social order; or (4) that it encourages disobedience to the laws and disaffection to the civil power; or (5) that it is everything which is bad, no matter how contradictory are the allegations against it. Let us begin by going, at some length, into these several classes of imputation, in order especially to provide against anything which may seem like over-statement or unfairness.

There is a very general impression that the Catholic religion is exceedingly lax in its morality. I do not mean, that Catholics are personally immoral, but what (if true) would be far worse: namely, that the Church herself connives 'at the sin of her unworthy children, by making the way of salvation too easy. The true cause of this alleged laxity is thought to be the Confessional, which it is very generally, but very erroneously, taken for granted, that all nominal Catholics frequent. Hence, our religion is considered to be very popular with indifferent sort of people; to make a great number of converts, male and female, from the less reputable portion of the community; and to do a great deal of harm to society, by restoring persons of damaged characters to that self-respect which the verdict of the

public reprobation would serve to humble. In short, the Church is thought to have a pliant and accommodating rule of morals, always ready to be carried into practice, by the dexterous aid of which she disarms attack, conciliates support, increases her numbers, promotes her influence, and enriches her treasury.

Should there happen, especially, to be a strong national prejudice in a non-Catholic country, which wears the appearance of zeal for strictness, and happens to clash with the Catholic view of the question to which it relates, the whole weight of such prejudice is at once brought to aggravate the charge of laxity which the Catholic Church has to sustain. Such a prejudice is that which prevails in England, and still more in Scotland, on what is called "the observance of the Sabbath." By this is not, of course, meant the consecration of our Lord's own Day to the purposes of worship and religious rest and recreation, but the notion which would fetter the liberty of Christians on that holy and happy day, by restrictions of the same nature with those which accompanied the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and which tend to convert a day of Christian joy and thankfulness into one of austerity and constraint. That the Catholic Church should be known to take the milder and more cheerful view of this question, is enough, with those who encourage the severer, to swell and point this charge of laxity against her.

Added to this, there is a widely-spread impression that the Catholic Church compasses her favourite objects at the cost of Christian simplicity and straightforwardness. The word "Jesuitical" has grown into the English language as

synonymous with all that is crafty and dishonest; and this word in its primary sense expresses what is thought to be the character of a certain Religious Society of undoubted influence in the Catholic Church, bearing the sacred name of our Lord and Saviour. When this vague charge is examined, it is found to mean, that Catholics scruple at no acts, however deceitful, and no words, however false, whereby they may compass their end; this end being, as is further assumed, not the spiritual good of the individual, the salvation of souls, or the advancement of the Divine glory, but the promotion of some private and selfish interest, and the aggrandizement of the Church, as a mere engine of political and social influence. Hence arises that deep and extensive suspicion of which the Catholic Church is the victim, whereby she is thought to have a body of the most astute emissaries, and a machinery of the most unprincipled ingenuity, always at her command; to be spreading nets of imperceptible tenuity for the capture of silly souls, and underlaying the foundations of society with mines of unfathomable depth, untraceable ramifications, and inextricable complexity.

Another and most popular accusation against our religion is, that it is eminently anti-social. It begins, they say, by sowing the seeds of dissension in private families, and speedily unhinges the whole fabric of society at large. It sets children against their parents, and sisters against their brothers; it divides bosom friends, and flings the torch of discord into the most united households. Nay, it casts its baneful shadow before it, in the form of "Puseyism," which resembles it, as in many other respects, so especially in this, that it

creates dissensions in families, promotes disobedience among children, severs worldly ties, clogs the social machinery, and complicates the action of government.

Nay (and this is the most frequent charge of all), the Catholic religion is essentially disloyal. Disloyalty is not so much the crime of Catholics, as it is the evil property of their Church. She encourages a "divided allegiance." She tries to serve two masters, and ends in preferring one. She recognizes principles of conduct which are inconsistent with the simple duty of subjects; and her laws are founded on a basis different altogether from that of the laws of the land. Hence, when plots are rife, and disaffection to the civil power extensively spread, Catholics have no reason to complain should they be suspected of having a principal hand in the mischief. All history shows that Popes incline to suspect Kings of encroachment, and Kings to charge Popes with usurpation; and since this natural enmity between the Church and the world is implied in the whole structure of the Catholic religion, what right have Catholics to impute unfairness to those who attribute to them a disposition which they can consistently disavow only by ignoring the precedents, and repudiating the maxims, of their Church?

Such are the common charges against us, the justice of which you must not for a moment suppose me to admit merely because it does not fall within the scope of my present argument to refute them. The simple fact is, that in all these imputations there is a vast structure of misrepresentation raised upon a certain foundation of truth. They are grievously unfair, not so much because

they misrepresent the one side of our religion which they select for reprehension (though this they also do), but because they take no account whatever of the other, which counterbalances and rectifies it. Again, before passing to my immediate subject, I may add, that no thinking person, I suppose, would deny the great difficulty of adjusting the scales between the opposite and naturally conflicting obligations of the Christian religion, or that in the practical exhibition of Catholic principles the due equilibrium may sometimes, without serious or intentional fault on any side, be actually disturbed. How to teach higher, so as not to clash with subordinate duty, to maintain truth so as not unnecessarily to break peace, or to study peace without compromising truth, are problems which cry more importunately for solution than they easily admit of it in the practice of erring mortals.

But the question with which we started was, whether these charges were unprecedented, not whether they were just. Was ever religion, the Catholic is tempted to exclaim, so misconstrued and calumniated as mine? So holy in its profession, yet reputed the advocate of sin! So single in its aims, yet everywhere charged with duplicity and deceit! So peaceable and loving, yet accounted a very firebrand of division! So studious of obedience, yet charged with fomenting disaffection to the laws and rebellion against the civil power!

Yes, my friends, there was once such a religion; pure, peaceable, loving as your own—nay, “peace” was its very motto, and love its message. Its Author and first Preacher was not holy alone, but holiness itself; and among the duties which He

inculcated upon His followers, none were more prominent than meekness, peaceableness, and obedience to lawful authority. Now, to say that this ancient religion on its first appearance in the world, and for many years afterwards, was hated, persecuted and maligned, is to say what is quite true indeed and much to the purpose; yet it is to say far less in the way of our present argument than is justified by the facts of the case. The charges it encountered were so remarkably similar to those of which our holy Church is the object, that it is hard to arrive at any conclusion but that the two religions must be one and the same.

The history of the first establishment of the dispensation to which I have referred is contained in a very trustworthy document. The Four Gospels give us the particulars of its introduction; the Acts of the Apostles describe its earliest progress. These records are in all our hands; let us turn to them, and see how far they supply us with precedents to the charges so frequently preferred against the Catholic Church of the present day.

1. The Catholic is said to be a "lax" religion, which holds out the right hand of fellowship to indifferent sort of people. You will often see persons of very suspicious character crowding around our confessionals; and when they come out they show, by their very gait and manner, that they have received some extraordinary encouragement. This comes, you are inclined to suspect, of a lax system of morality, which pampers the profligate at the expense of the respectable. Moreover, you are apt to observe, that it is the "black sheep" of the family who becomes a



Catholic. It is often the spendthrift or the outcast, rather than the more orderly and well-conducted inmates of their father's household, who turn up, when we least expect it, in the Catholic Church. Often, indeed, it is otherwise; yet the connection between a youth of sin and an age of Catholic devotion is certainly common enough to justify the impression that there is some point of contact between the two states. Now is it not very curious that our Blessed Saviour was subjected to precisely the same charge which the Catholic Church has now to encounter? Turn to the Fifteenth Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and you will there find that your Divine Redeemer vindicates Himself from the imputation of receiving sinners and eating with them, not by denying the fact, but by explaining the reason of such forbearance and condescension.\* To such an extent, indeed, did He carry His indulgence, that it was not only brought against Him on several occasions in connection with particular instances of it, but became the ground of a kind of proverbial designation of Him, as "the Friend of publicans and sinners."† Moreover, some of those to whom our Lord showed remarkable favour were just of the class which would now be termed, and indeed very justly termed, "disreputable." To the instances which will readily occur to your thoughts, I will add that of Zachæus, a man who had evidently been guilty of great dishonesty in money transactions; the very crime which would have marked him for especial obloquy in a commercial country like our own. The Prodigal Son, again, was not a real character;

\* St. Luke, xv. 2, &c.

† Ib. vii. 34.

but he stands as the representative of a large class towards which the Catholic Church has often manifested a degree of compassion which worldly men would consider misplaced and injudicious in the highest degree. Now I have already shown you\* why it is that persons of this description are naturally attracted to the Catholic Church, and how it is that by a process often remarkably expeditious this great Physician of souls restores such persons to health and peace of mind; and that whatever may be said upon the rapidity of this process, and the apparently slender and easy conditions upon which its effect depends, the Catholic Church has the practice of our Lord to justify her in these characteristics of her demeanour towards the greatest and most notorious of sinners. Nothing more, therefore, is required under this head than to ask you whether it be unfair to suppose that many who now object laxity to the Catholic Church for no better reason than that her reception of great sinners is cordial, and her treatment of them most kind and indulgent, would probably have been among the number of those Pharisees in our Lord's time, who were continually twitting Him with the laxity of His spiritual administration?

There are other points in which heretical calumnies are not without their Jewish precedents. Thus, with regard to the Lord's Day. It is, I think, impossible to exaggerate the difference between the Catholic view of this subject, and that which is so deeply ingrained in the British Protestant mind. Now you remember how strongly our Lord set Himself against the

\* Discourse VI.

superstitious and puritanical observance of the Sabbath, which had come into practise even among the Jews at the time of His Advent;\* and when you reflect that the Christian Sunday is not the Sabbath at all, but a different day altogether, set apart for a different reason, and in commemoration of the most joyful event which ever happened, or ever will happen, in the history of the world—the observance of which, indeed, so far as it implies the consecration of a certain portion of our time to God, is of divine, but so far as it relates to the day prescribed and the particular mode of keeping it, is of ecclesiastical institution—you can scarcely doubt which of the two great conflicting views of this question, that which makes the Sunday a day of mortifying restraint, or that which treats it as one of the highest and purest religious happiness and festivity, is the more in accordance with the teaching and example of our divine Lord. Surely it is a monstrous perversion of Gospel truth to stipulate for a mode of keeping the weekly Feast of our Lord's Resurrection more rigorous even than that which He pronounced to be the duty of Jews in respect of their ceremonial Sabbath.

2. We come now to the charge of duplicity and disingenuousness involved in the popular phrase "Jesuitry." I strongly suspect that this objection to the Catholic Church presupposes a material difference of principle as to the respective views of the Gospel and the World entertained by us and our opponents. Do those who charge the Catholic Church with cunning in her modes of procedure with respect to the world, fully realize

\* St. Luke, vi. 2 -9; also St. Matt. xii. 5-8.

the importance of what that Church undertakes to effect, and the extraordinary difficulties she has to encounter in effecting it? If they choose to say either, on the one hand, that the "good" at which the Catholic Church aims, is merely her own worldly aggrandisement; or, on the other hand, that in pursuit of *any* good, she is prepared to do actual "evil," then, no doubt, they are justified in the severest of their reproaches. But let them consider whether worldly ambition be not precisely the aspect which Catholic zeal for the conversion of all mankind would be sure to assume in the eyes of persons not habitually accustomed to regard any but worldly objects as the adequate occasions of such devoted zeal? And again, whether our national instincts do not lead us (contrary to our own recognized principles of morality) to account *mere* ingenuousness as a duty in the abstract? Do these objectors make due allowance for the enormous wickedness of the world, and its intense hatred of Gospel Truth? Do they reflect that Christians can take no other view of the mere world, when brought into conflict with it, than that which men of the world are accustomed to take of thieves and lunatics? Now, let me ask you, as candid judges, whether you consider "ingenuousness," as it is called, such a duty in itself, and under all circumstances, as that you would consider it necessary to practise it in your dealings with a man who meditated your life, or was even trying to secure your property? Do not even your own casuists say that in dealing with gentry of this description, or even with dangerous lunatics, it is not merely no sin, but rather a duty, to dissemble to the very verge, at least, of positive falsehood? Even in

England, where truth and straightforwardness are so highly and so justly prized, in the abstract, I never heard of any one who thought that there were no cases in which a man forfeits the claim to be openly dealt with. Now I can assure you that the Catholic Church thinks far worse of her sworn enemy the World, than you can possibly think of a pickpocket, or a highwayman; and, on the other hand, that she has a Cause to contend for, infinitely higher (if we will only estimate things according to their real value) than any man's life, property, or even reputation. If then you will but grant me, that in order to secure objects like these, a person may be justified in practising dissimulation, or rather may be obliged to practise it; you will feel it right to satisfy yourselves, beyond all possibility of mistake, that any methods employed by the Catholic Church for such an object as that of saving souls, are so clearly different from those you would yourselves defend in matters of infinitely less importance, as to become manifestly wrong, when those are manifestly right.

Consider, again, the established laws, and recognized principles, of that part of political science which goes by the name of diplomacy. Diplomacy is a thing, I know, very open to abuse, and which easily degenerates into a kind of trickery. Indeed, if you confine yourselves to speaking of the *dangers* incident even to *spiritual* policy, I shall be entirely on your side. But here we are concerned with the principle, not with the practical perversion of such principle. Now here again; if such matters as the balance of national power, the interests of trade, or the conclusion of a peace, will warrant, and even demand, a great

departure from the rules of simple straightforwardness, who shall say that, where objects of eternal moment are to be gained by an advantageous treaty with such a power as the world; a power so exorbitant in her demands, so astute in her contrivances, so shameless in her evasions; we are to deal with our rival in the same spirit of simplicity and of confidence, as if we had to negotiate with the most friendly and magnanimous of potentates?

At all events, if such be your opinion, you will certainly have to shift the ground of controversy from the field of the present Catholic, to that of the primitive Apostolic Church, and to let St. Paul himself bear the brunt of your attack. Now it is a curious fact, that the very phrase in which the eminently wise policy of that great master of the human heart is described by himself has passed almost into a reproach. "I became all things," he says, "to all men, that I might save all;"\* the very course, I apprehend, which, in a modern Catholic, would be pronounced disingenuous, insincere, and immoral. A greater difference of principle and practice than that which divided Jew from Greek could scarcely be paralleled, except indeed in the difference which divided both from Christianity; yet St. Paul tells us, that, with no other object than to gain converts from either class, he deemed it right to condescend alternately to their most opposite characteristics of sentiment and observance, and thus to adopt a course, which, in the eyes of an ill-informed or ill-natured critic, would certainly have appeared crafty, vacillating, and double-

\* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

mind in the highest degree.\* But indeed if you will consider the great rule given by our Lord Himself for the conduct of His disciples in their dealings with the powers of the world, you will, I think, admit how impossible it must be for them, in the measure in which they observe that rule, to escape the imputation of disingenuousness and duplicity. "Behold," He says, "I send you as sheep among wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves." Then He adds, "But beware of men."† Thus our Lord describes the powers of the world with whom the Church is to be brought into collision as very "wolves." Wolves certainly have no great claim upon the confidence of the poor sheep; and, unless the sheep court death, they must needs get out of the wolves' way, as best they can. And this, in the parallel case of Christians and the world, must lead to what is called "evasion." For though it is a duty in the Christian to suffer death rather than betray his Master's cause, he is not bound to court death by any unnecessary openness; rather, it is his duty to preserve life at the expense of everything but truth and virtue. Then, what a strong expression is this, "Be ye wise as serpents!" And I would have you think whether a Christian priest, habitually acting upon such a maxim, especially in times of persecution, could well escape the charge, however he might and must avoid the fact, of dishonest dealing?

3. But it is said, moreover, that the Catholic religion makes terrible havoc with the peace and good order of families, and that it introduces into all

\* The Apostles, like our Lord, were popularly regarded as "deceivers," 2 Cor. vi. 8.

† St. Matt. x. 16, 17; also St. Luke, x. 3.

human society an element of disunion and disorganization, the very reverse of that soothing and healing virtue which the Gospel of Christ might be supposed to carry with it. See how suspicious fathers of families and masters of households are of its introduction into their domestic circles or establishments! how they track its invasions, and prognosticate its approaches, with the sagacity of hounds! "Christianity," they say, "was to be the herald of peace, not the forerunner of divisions. Its Founder is called in prophecy the 'Prince of Peace,'\* and 'Peace on earth, good will towards men,'† was the very description of its character in the angelic announcement of the Nativity." But listen, on the other hand, to the solemn declaration of our Lord Himself as to the nature of His mission, and the effects of its reception in the world. Hear His own words in that very discourse in which He instructs His disciples how to comport themselves in their dealings with the world. "Do not think," He says, "that I came to send peace upon earth; I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother; and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household."‡ What, then, does this charge of being a scourge of families, a bone of contention, an apple of discord, and the like,—what, I ask, does it all prove, except that the Catholic religion entirely fulfils the conditions of the true Gospel by proving itself that keen and double-edged sword which cuts into

\* Isaias, ix. 6.

† St. Luke, ii. 14 (P. V.)

‡ St. Matt. x. 34, 35, 36.



the body of the world with a most loving sharpness, and a most merciful implacability ; and that, too, in the fairer as well as the more repulsive forms of this insidious foe ? Elsewhere, indeed, our Lord expresses in still stronger phrase the unsettling, exciting, and even polemical, nature of His religion. "I am come," He says, "*to cast fire on the earth*, and what will I, but that it be kindled ?" \* "To cast fire on the earth !" Why, if the Christian religion were to be pronounced "inflammatory," or even "revolutionary," could we, with these words of our Lord before us, declare the charge to be simply calumnious ? And are we bound to contradict, or warranted in quarrelling with, a judgment on the Catholic Church which we could not reasonably resent even if the Gospel itself were the subject of it ? The great Society of the Jesuits, which, above all other portions of the Catholic Church, has been charged with introducing discord into families and into the world at large, places these last words of our Lord upon the very front of her institute, † and almost makes them her motto, not only as a memento to herself of her own work of zeal, but as a continual though silent protest against the justice of the charge to which that Company, as the very battle-horse of the Catholic Church, has been principally obnoxious.

But if it be in strict agreement with our Lord's predictions that the Catholic religion should produce a great deal of disunion in families where all are not of one mind about it, we can scarcely object to it, as an unscriptural feature, that it has broken in with little ceremony upon many of the

\* St. Luke, xii. 49.

† They form the sentence called the "Communion," in the Mass for the Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola.

received traditions of human society. Such a result has been the natural consequence of a faithful adherence on the part of the Catholic Church to the various lessons of the New Testament which point out "the world" as the great object of the Christian's unceasing antagonism. If you will but read with attention that most interesting portion of the historical Scriptures known as the "Acts of the Apostles," you will meet with a picture of early Christianity, in its conflict with the world, so similar to those which abound in the annals of the Catholic Church, that you will be almost inclined to fancy you have mistaken the era to which the history refers, and that you are perusing the account of some tremendous "Papal Aggression" upon the self-complacent repose of a modern heathen nation. Take, for example, the transactions which followed upon the miraculous cure of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple in Jerusalem.\* St. Peter and St. John, the two Apostles concerned, take advantage of the incident to press upon the multitude the claims of this wonderful religion. We know, indeed, that Jerusalem was at that time a part of the great Roman empire, and that one of the Herod family resided there with a dependent sovereign power, as a kind of colonial governor, or lord-lieutenant. Now the remarkable thing is, that Peter and John seem to have set to work on their missionary occupations, precisely as if no such person as Herod had been in existence. So, at least, I conclude, from finding what a terrible uproar followed upon their sermon. It is curious too, and by no means without parallel in later times, that the persons to bring down the

\* Acts, iii.

civil power upon these poor Apostles were the ministers of the established religion. It happened, indeed, that this established religion, unlike many other established religions, had a great deal of truth in it; but this made no difference as to the hatred of the new Christian intruders, and the Jewish Priests were as much excited against them as Brahmins or Buddhists could have been against any Catholic missionaries in India. Well, what did these Jewish Priests and leaders of sects do? They brought Peter and John before the Council, and asked them for an account of their doctrine. The Apostles treated their judges with the respect always due to official rank, and made their defence. The councillors were aware that these new preachers had already acquired a certain influence with the people; so they did not wish to punish them, for fear of a turmoil; and, like many of their successors in later times, tried to bring their troublesome customers to terms. "Calling them," it is said, "they charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus."\* Do you think the Apostles were bound to hold their peace, as these authorities demanded? So thought not the Apostles themselves. For "Peter and John answering said to them, If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge you. For *we cannot but speak* the things which we have seen and heard."† Now if Peter and John had been two Catholic Missionaries, would they not have been proclaimed rebels against authority, or at least promoters of a most gratuitous and unwarrantable disturbance? You may say, if you please, that Catholic Missionaries do not preach the same

\* Acts, iv. 18.

† Ib. ver. 19, 20.

religion with the Apostles; that is another question. But, any how, you cannot say that, believing as they do their religion to be the identical Gospel, they have not apostolic precedent on their side in their mode of preaching it.

Two Missionary Priests arrive in a certain city, and commence operations. They preach on one day in three successive weeks to large audiences, both of rich and poor. Many become converts, and attach themselves to the Missionaries, including some of the more considerable persons of the place, and several ladies of rank. At first this phenomenon excites no particular attention; but the conversion of some rich and influential people, especially of these noble ladies, attracts the notice and draws down the wrath of the authorities. The ministers of the established religion (much to their discredit, and, I am afraid, because they did not wish the new teachers to have more influence with the people than themselves,) collect a party of ruffians, and go straight to the house where the Missionaries lodge. The Missionaries happen to be from home; but, determined not to lose their day's work, the party get possession of the poor landlord, whom they drag off, by main force, to the police court. Having arrived there, they lay their charge in the following terms: "The preachers, who are going about turning everything topsy-turvy, are come into our hitherto peaceful and united city, and all the people are wild after them. We may add that these preachers and their followers are not merely most seditious citizens, but most disloyal subjects, who set the laws at defiance, and even go the length of saying that they owe allegiance to a king of their own, which of course implies that they are not dutiful

subjects of our own gracious sovereign. We have failed to catch them ; but, instead, we have brought you the person who harbours them in his house, and thus renders himself one of their accomplices." The magistrates, having heard the complaint, bind over the landlord to keep the peace, and hold themselves in readiness to deal with the case of the principals on a future occasion. Meanwhile, the friends of the two Missionaries get wind of the facts, and convey them out of the place.\*

Such is my story. And now, I ask you, whether you would not be disposed to fix the place of its occurrence in some provincial town in England or Scotland ; its date anywhere in the last three centuries ; and to assign the two Missionaries to some such Religious Order as that of St. Francis, St. Vincent of Paul, or St. Alphonso Liguori ? The appropriation would indeed be most natural, and fully warranted by the facts of the case. But it would nevertheless be inaccurate. The scene of the occurrence just narrated was the ancient Thessalonica, the date somewhere about the Year of Grace 53, the Missionaries were St. Paul and St. Silas, and my authority for the story is the Book of the Acts of Apostles.

4. You will have been prepared by what has gone before for the answer I shall make to the imputation upon the Catholic religion, that it is favourable to disloyalty. If by disloyalty be meant a natural hostility to civil government, an impatience of authority, a spirit of insubordination, a reluctance to give honour where honour is due, or to admit Cæsar's authority in Cæsar's own province, nothing can be more untrue or unjust, than to

\* See Acts, xvii. 1—10.

charge our religion with any encouragement, or anything short of the strongest discouragement, of these and similar sentiments. But if by the imputation of disloyalty it be meant that we recognize God, and the power which we believe to represent Him on earth, as having a claim upon our obedience distinct altogether from any human authority whatever, and as superior to it in character as the interests of heaven are above those of earth; that we not only obey God rather than man, but (which is the necessary consequence) must disobey man where man orders contrariwise to God; this, indeed, is a disloyalty to which we must plead guilty, in the same sense in which the Apostles were disloyal when they continued to preach the Gospel against the bidding of the civil magistrates, or our Divine Lord Himself, when He erected a Kingdom of His own within the jurisdiction of Cæsar's Empire.

But now let me ask you, whether the charge of fostering rebellion against the civil power has ever been one whit more rife, even against the Catholic Church, than it was against the Apostles and our Lord Himself? You will admit, on a survey of the Evangelical and Apostolic history contained in the Bible, that Christianity, on its first introduction, was certainly looked upon as a premeditated attack upon authority, an innovation upon established order, a rash and unjustifiable aggression upon the peace of the world; in short, a thoroughgoing and world-wide *revolution*. To prove this statement at length would carry me beyond my limits, and be, moreover, almost disrespectful to your own knowledge of the Scriptures. But one or two quotations will prove to you that the account just given of the view which

the world had of the Gospel on its first appearance is no exaggeration. Consider only that the condemnation of Jesus Christ our Lord was founded upon two great charges: the one, that He taught what was contrary to the established religion; the other, that He undermined the authority of the state. Before Caiaphas, He was accused of threatening to destroy the Temple;\* before Pilate, His enemies said, "We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the King."† Pilate, you remember, was disposed to be lenient, but they insisted, "He stirreth up the people." When Pilate prepared to release Him, they turned the cry of disloyalty against the judge:—"The Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."‡ And this argument seems to have weighed with the loyal governor. "For when Pilate *had heard these words* he brought Jesus forth."§ Still, however, he clung to the side of mercy, for he was a weak rather than a thoroughly wicked man, who, through the love of popularity, stifled his convictions of the innocence of the Accused. "They cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." Pilate said to them, almost provokingly, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar;" that is, we will have no "divided allegiance," no "*imperium in imperio*." Did you never, my non-Catholic hearers, know of a similar

\* St. Matt. xxvi. 61.

† St. John, xix. 12.

‡ St. Luke, xxiii. 2.

§ Ib. ver. 13.

cry being raised against the Catholic Church? Now it is quite true that many of the charges which the Jews brought against our Lord were gross calumnies. Our Lord was represented to have "stirred up the people," as if such had been the object of His teaching, and not merely the unavoidable effect of preaching God's Truth in a bad world. He was charged with undermining Cæsar's authority, with which He never interfered but when it clashed with the rights of God. He was specifically accused of having discountenanced the payment of the lawful tribute or taxes, whereas He had, on the contrary, sanctioned and recommended it.\* But this will always be the fate of true doctrine and true Christian practice, when subjected to the judgment of indiscriminating people, who take broad and superficial views of things, and make no allowance for those faint and delicate lines which separate good and evil from one another.

It can hardly be necessary that I should go on to deduce from the history of the Acts of the Apostles evidence of this same charge of disloyalty and sedition, as brought against the earliest teachers of Christianity. "The disciple," as our Lord said, "is not above his master,"† and cannot expect to receive a milder treatment, unless, indeed, he adopt a laxer practice, which will of course secure it. But you have seen how the Apostles encountered this same charge of rebellion against the civil power, the very first time they opened their mouth in public.‡ They at once became marked men—the objects of universal dread and suspicion

\* St. Matt. xxii. 17—21.

† Ib. x. 24.

‡ Acts, iv. 1, 2.



among established authorities and all in their interest. They were arraigned before judicial tribunals, accused of creating a popular tumult, reprimanded, "threatened,"\* and only not sent to prison that time because they had secured a considerable body of supporters among the people. This forbearance, however, was not of long duration. In the course of a short time, Stephen, a leading teacher of the new religion, fell a victim to his zeal in its cause; and the charge against him was, that he had "spoken against the holy place and the law"—that is, contravened the Established Church. Then James, an Apostle, was beheaded, and Peter cast into prison; the same fate awaited St. Paul and his companion Silas at Philippi, where they were charged with the old offence of "disturbing the city and preaching a fashion which is not lawful," they said, "for us to receive nor observe, being Romans."† It was a most convenient cry, for it served every one who, like those Philippian masters of the divining girl,‡ and afterwards the Ephesian silversmiths,§ had vested interests in the existing system. Once more, too, I must direct you to the story of the poor landlord's apprehension at Thessalonica, which I have already translated into modern English. You will there see what a character the Apostles had gained for being busybodies and mischief-makers. "They that set the city in an uproar are come hither also." In your version it is still stronger. "These that have *turned the world upside down.*"|| To omit other proofs of the same kind I will conclude by asking

\* Acts, iv. 21.    † Ib. xvi. 20, 21.    ‡ Ib. ver. 16.

§ Ib. xix. 24.

|| Ib. xvii. 6.

you to read the speech of Tertullus before Felix, the Roman governor. It is just such as (allowing for the difference in form) a Protestant counsel might have delivered before an English tribunal against a Catholic priest who had fallen under the power of the law on a similar charge. "Whereas through thee" (observe the measured and respectful phraseology) "we live in much peace, and many things are rectified by thy providence, we accept it always and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thanksgiving. But that I be no further tedious to thee, I desire thee of thy clemency to hear us in few words. We have found this to be a *pestilent* man" (pray note the phrase: it is so peculiarly *modern*), "a pestilent man, and raising sedition among all the Jews throughout the world" (this was a slight exaggeration), "and author of the sedition" (observe) "of the *sect of the Nazarenes*."\* There is more of the same kind of rhetoric, which I will spare you. Let me, however, draw your kind attention to the designation given to Christianity: "the sect of the Nazarenes." There is nothing like giving a bad name to a party you desire to annihilate. Nazareth, as we know, was a place in great disrepute among the Jews and all who espoused their cause,† and there could not be a more telling argument in the hands of a clever barrister against the Christians than to call them "a sect," and identify them with a place of unpopular note. It is just like calling Catholics "Romish schismatics" when we wish to be unusually courteous to them.

5. Lastly; I observed earlier, that the Catholic religion has a knack of attracting to itself the

\* Acts, xxiv. 2—5.

† St. John, i. 46.

most various and even contradictory objections. You know that this peculiarity, were we to meet with it in the case of an individual, would be considered to prove nothing but the extraordinary, the insane, prejudice of which he must be the object. "These contradictory charges," we should say, "may be left to refute one another. This individual may be very clever or very silly, but he cannot be both at once. He may be a man of the most inflexible will, or of the most timeserving spirit, but you must choose your side of objection, otherwise we shall suspect you of being a mere enemy of this person, who is resolved that he shall be in the wrong, do what he will." Now, I ask you, whether the poor Catholic Church be not this most unfortunate victim, who encounters the most opposite and incompatible charges? Have we not all heard her called the most rigid, yet the laxest, of moralists? the most arbitrary of tyrants, yet the most degraded of slaves? the most needlessly irritating in her demeanour towards the world, yet at the same time the most abject in her submission to it, &c. &c.? I have heard, indeed, of *individuals* who were the objects of this lavish and random censure, such as the man whom there is some political or party object in depressing; or one who thwarts you in some favourite project. But I never heard but of one *institution*, except the Catholic (if, indeed, the two be not one and the same), which had the bad or the good luck to draw down upon it this fire of attack from the most opposite quarters, and which had to sustain charges so utterly suicidal of one another. But in the New Testament I read of something exactly parallel to it. "Whereunto shall I esteem this generation to be like? It is like to children

sitting in the market-place, who, crying to their companions, say: We have piped to you, and you have not danced: we have lamented, and you have not mourned. For John came neither eating nor drinking; and they say: He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say: Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners. And wisdom is justified by her children.”\* This surely is a case quite in point to our present subject. It seems that, do what they would, our Lord and His disciples could never conciliate a prejudiced people, determined to regard them as, anyhow, in the wrong. If they piped, this cross-gained people would not dance; and if they lamented, it would not mourn. These unreasonable critics objected to St. John the Baptist that he was a hermit; to our Saviour (oh, the blasphemy!) that He was a glutton and a wine-bibber. And we Catholics, I suppose, when in the same way we find ourselves exposed to the same kind of national prejudice, must comfort ourselves by the thought that “wisdom is justified by her children,” that is, by those who know and love her, not by the world, which is querulous of all her manifestations, because totally ignorant of her true nature.

The conclusion, therefore, which I would build upon the foregoing evidence may be stated in the following terms: That the Catholic religion should be exposed to certain charges which it is thus proved to share with the Gospel, even in our Lord’s time, is evidently no argument against that religion, unless it be also an argument against the Gospel.

\* St. Matt, xi. 16—19.

But this is by no means all. The remarkable coincidence between the character and form of the charges brought respectively against Scripture Christianity, on its first introduction, and the Catholic religion of later times, surely betokens something common in the two religions, so far as, for argument's sake, we may view them as distinct.

Indeed, is not the universal and uniform unpopularity of the Catholic Church in every age of its history, and every place of its exhibition, a most remarkable evidence of its identity with the Gospel? Can you point to any single religion, except the Catholic, which has so consistently preserved this great note of Gospel truth? Is it not certain that all *popular* religious systems have a grand *primâ facie* note against them; a fact to get over and explain away, when they try to make themselves out as the legitimate successors of that Gospel which was to be hated of all men for its Founder's sake?\* That Gospel, as it was exhibited in the days of the Apostles, evidently corresponded with this description of its character; but what, I ask, has become of the "reproach of the Cross," as time has proceeded, except under the banner of the Catholic Church? The Catholic Church, indeed, has varied in external prosperity. She has received, at times, a certain sort and measure of encouragement from the world, and this fact has partially disguised from public view the "marks of the nails," the tokens of her allegiance to a crucified Master, which she has incessantly carried about her. But look at her in her history; in her sustained protests against sin and ungodliness; in her tremendous conflicts with the Civil Power;

\* St. Matt. xxiv. 9.

in her inflexible demeanour towards heretics; in her "unchanging and unchangeable" principles; in her Religious Orders; and, while you are reminded of the fact, you will recognise the cause of her interminable and internecine war with the world. Survey her in this country at the present moment. Here she is, eighteen hundred years old, yet with all the characteristics of her infant life apparent in her very exterior. What is the one religion in England which has been consistently hated by the world, ever since it received an independent position, and could be contemplated as an external fact? What is that religion of which, in the midst of our advanced civilization, the ministers are pointed at with the finger of scorn in those very streets where the immoralities they denounce are permitted without protest? What body of men in this country is it whose motives, as a body, are habitually suspected, whose good faith questioned, whose name "put out as evil?" Twice, in my recollection, two very different rivals have risen up, who, for a time, bid fair to divide with the Catholic religion the note of the world's hatred. The first was the great "evangelical" school in the Established Church, as it appeared about half a century ago in the persons of such men as the late Mr. Wilberforce among the laity, or Henry Martyn among the clergy. But where is now the fruit of that early promise? The party which once boasted these really great names has subsided into the body of a wealthy and popular institution; its statesmen have sacrificed their independence; its evangelists have settled into beneficiaries. The age of its chivalry is gone; and its flowers have withered away, because the plant on which they grew had no depth of earth to sustain it. The

same is true, in its measure, of the great Wesleyan demonstration of the last century. Nearer to our own time there has been a movement in the Establishment of far more hopeful promise, yet alike without any power of independent existence. Never, perhaps, in the history of the Christian world, did a form of religious profession so largely participate with the Catholic Church the note of unpopularity, and in so similar a shape, as the great Tractarian revival of our own time. But *this* fact, surely, is on the side of our argument. For Tractarianism has borne this token of evangelical truth, so far forth only as it is itself a shadow of Catholicity. Where, otherwise, it will share, as it is sharing, the fate of all that is heretical at the core; it will corrupt away by degrees, and die out like its predecessors.

And now, my own Catholic children, one word of instruction and admonitory reflection for ourselves. Do not be even impatient of a portion which you share with your Lord, His Apostles, and the Church of all ages. Do not even fret or be dismayed at it; still less try to disavow or evade it by embracing the world's maxims, affecting its manners, or borrowing its phraseology. Be careful, indeed, not to deserve the world's enmity by imprudent courses, or an unkind and unconciliatory exterior: on the contrary, study to win it by all means which are safe from unlawful compromise. But to expect that you will escape that hatred is to forget that you are sworn liegemen of the Cross, and that your religion is the true and only Gospel of Christ. The tendency to be surprised, and, perhaps, almost staggered, by the world's opposition, of which I spoke at the beginning, is that which St. John recognises in the words, "Wonder

not, brethren, if the world hate you.”\* For even then Christians had begun to find the truth of their Lord’s prediction, and to need the encouragement by which He accompanied it. “If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you: the servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do unto you for My name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.”†

\* 1 St. John, iii. 13.

† St. John xv. 18—21.





## DISCOURSE XII.

AUTHORITATIVE TEACHING THROUGH THE  
ACTION OF A BODY POLITIC.

WE have hitherto been occupied in considering the testimony which the Bible affords to isolated doctrines of the Catholic Church, or to certain characteristics of the Catholic Religion. A far more important, although certainly not more difficult portion of our task, remains to be accomplished; which is to show, that the Bible distinctly, consistently, and historically, warrants the principle of Authoritative Teaching; and that, not merely as dependent upon the personal claims of individuals raised up from time to time as messengers of truth to man, but as inherent in the very constitution of a settled society, or body corporate, invested, once for all, by its Divine Founder with an ambassadorial as well as oracular power, so as to be at the same time the Representative of God's sovereignty in the world, and the final Interpreter of His word and will to man. I have said that such a position, if it can but be satisfactorily established, is by far the most important of any which has yet come before us, and for this plain reason: that it involves the whole principle of Catholic authority as distinct from the mere details of Catholic teaching; and, inasmuch as that principle possesses absolutely no

representation whatever, in any of the various religious bodies of this country which dispute the claims of the Catholic Church; that Church remains in unquestionable possession of the right to be regarded (so far forth) as the Church of Christ and His Apostles, duly qualified to teach the world. And I have added, though at the risk of seeming to advance a high pretension antecedently to all proof of it, that this position is, at the least, as easy to be established as any which we have yet encountered; because, I thereby actually and greatly understate my own firm conviction, which is, that while there is no theory of religious teaching except the Catholic which can advance even the shadow of a pretence to Scriptural authority; that which forms the basis and sanction of our holy Faith is recognised or implied in every page of the New Testament history, from the first words spoken by our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount, to the close of the Apostolic era with the last years of St. John the Evangelist.

Now, as I have further hinted, authoritative teaching itself is actually divisible into two distinct kinds. It may be vested in individual messengers, the founders of certain schools, or the rallying-point of a body of disciples; who may be either really accredited by God to the office of instructors, or may derive from the confidence of their followers a claim of authority for which they may be unable to exhibit any more satisfactory credentials. The former of these cases would admit of illustration from the office of the ancient Prophets, who were specially commissioned by God, under the Jewish Dispensation, to assist from time to time in carrying out the provisious

of the Mosaic Law, whether by enforcing what was essential to it, modifying what was variable, obviating misrepresentations, or correcting abuses. The latter case would find its example, perhaps, in the assumed authority of certain Scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's time; but, at any rate, in the leadership of modern sects or religious parties.

The *personal*, as distinguished from the *corporate*, method of authoritative teaching, whether as symbolized under the true, or shadowed under the counterfeit form, is quite conceivable as a fulfilment of the requisite conditions of the case. But, even antecedently to all direct evidence against its claim to be regarded as the divinely appointed channel for the diffusion and preservation of Christianity in the world, it has precedent and analogy entirely against it.

In the first place, it is contrary to the order of the material universe. Almighty God does not regulate the course of the physical world by a series of special interventions; but He has made it to depend upon the operation of a self-acting system; leaving, of course, an opening for occasional interruptions of the natural order in the form of miracle. But, at the first creation of all, He did not merely act, as we may say, for the moment; but brought into existence a marvelously perfect machinery, which to the end of time should do His work in virtue of inherent powers whether of continual sustentation, or periodical reproduction.

Systematic, again, as distinguished from personal agency, is the most agreeable to the order of human society. Take the administration of the laws, for instance. It is put upon a footing which makes it independent of the need of re-

peated innovation. The main office of living authorities, in regard to it, is that of interpretation and application. Its administration is personal, but its basis is permanent, its precedents authoritative, and its operation regular. The same is true of civil government, both in the general and in all its departments. The most absolute monarchy could not subsist for any length of time without some recognised principle of indirect and collective agency; whereby the authority of the monarch may be enforced, his spirit diffused, and his will communicated, through the co-operative and sympathetic functions of the state. Indeed, even those relations, which, like the parental, are the most immediate and personal of all, are not irrespective of such indirect and collateral aids of government. A well-regulated family is a little polity, in which every member helps to maintain order and circulate a spirit; the father representing the element of authority, the mother, of clemency, and brothers of different ages, and sisters, and even domestics, all in their several places and characters uniting towards the "end" of the little institution.

Indeed, if we will but reflect upon the true idea and proper object of all teaching, we shall at once perceive that its purposes can be effectually answered on a large scale, only by what may be termed the institutional, as distinguished from the personal, method of inculcation. The proper use of teaching, as I need scarcely observe, is not merely to impart truth, but to form character, and propagate a spirit. How can these objects be accomplished, in any satisfactory manner, except by means of an institution or body politic? A teacher may indeed convey (as every good

teacher does convey) his own character to his disciples ; but in order to diffuse a spirit throughout a body, still more over a nation, much more over the world, it is necessary that there should be spread over the area to be acted upon, different circles of influence, numerous in amount, united in sympathy, and mutually rivetted to each other through the effect of constant intercommunion. Consider the influence of the great British empire, and how it has been gained, and how it is supported. The primeval source and sustaining power of the whole is the English Constitution; the origin and gradual growth of which, the modifications it has undergone, the shocks it has weathered, the accretions it has received in the course of ages, are matters which the historian can trace, and the politician point to, as distinctly as they can review the acts of our Parliament, or chronicle the series of our sovereigns. But the effect which the English Constitution has produced upon the character of the English people, and the fortunes of the English nation, this, indeed, is a less definite and tangible ground of inquiry ; yet no reasonable person either questions the fact of such influence, or doubts that it is the result of an agency thus systematic in its nature, and diversified in its operation. And who will deny that the object of a Revelation is not merely to announce certain facts, but to promote a certain character?—no one, surely, who remembers that the Kingdom of God is likened, by our Lord, to “leaven,” the property of which is to transform the substance into which it is introduced.\* Then, I say, the analogy of human society (which is, after all, one of the

\* St. Matt. xiii. 33.

earthly transcripts of the Divine mode of government) would lead us to expect that the teaching of Revealed Truth would be vested in an organized polity, rather than committed to the issue of a series of insulated communications.

And this view of the case is in strict conformity with the precedents of revealed religion. During the earlier ages of the world, the history of which is given in the book of Genesis, communications of the Divine Will to man seem to have been made in the way of distinct and successive revelations to individuals. But, no sooner were the chosen people ready to be located in the promised land, and thus fitted to become the permanent depositories of revealed Truth, than Almighty God delegated His servant Moses, not merely to convey a message, but to found a polity. The Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, supply us with the amplest information as to the constitution, laws, and government, of this great religious commonwealth; and, however various were the fortunes of the people, or whatever exceptional modes of dealing with them were occasionally resorted to in the interval, we find the evidences of this organization still appearing at the advent of the Messiah, although that event had been preceded by a long suspension of prophetic interpositions. For, when Christ came, He could point to the Scribes and Pharisees, notwithstanding all their doctrinal corruptions, and all their individual crimes, as occupants of the chair of Moses; and as challenging, in virtue of their official authority, that respect and deference which they had gone far to forfeit by their personal delinquencies.\*

\* St. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

But our Divine Redeemer, while He thus recognized and sanctioned the existing authorities of the Jewish Church, was Himself engaged in founding a new Polity, which was to supersede it; unconfined, like itself, to place, and unbounded by time. Yet, so jealous was He, and so conservative, as I may say, of the great principle of authority and obedience, that He did not dispel the claims of the old Dispensation, till the new was ready to take its place. Like a master-architect, He built round the doomed fabric with the walls of that which was to replace it; so that there should be no interval between the termination of the office of the one, and the inauguration of that of the other; but the Old Polity should, as it were, die into the New, and the New spring out of the Old. At the very time when our Lord was enjoining on His disciples obedience to the powers who then were, and Himself observing with the most punctual exactness the institutions of the ancient Law, He was laying deep the foundations of the Christian Church, and vindicating, in His own Person, that great rule of dogmatic authority, which was overlaid and getting into disrepute under the weight of private and unauthentic traditions. Consider His Sermon on the Mount; it opens with a majestic series of authoritative benedictions, and it proceeds with an assertion of the power to interpret the meaning, extend the application, and reinforce the sanction of the Divine Law. "Ye have heard that it has been said;" "but I say unto you." In these and similar phrases did our Lord inaugurate His Ministry upon the basis of Dogmatic Teaching. And this was apparent to His own immediate hearers; for what do we read of the impression



produced on their minds by this opening discourse? "It came to pass, when Jesus had fully ended these words, the people were in admiration at His doctrine; *for He was teaching them as one having power*, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees."\* The distinction which the people traced between our Lord's teaching and that of the Scribes and Pharisees may easily be understood. These Jewish Doctors had authority to teach; yet did they teach without authority, because they taught something beside the dogmatic truth of their Church. They had formed a school, not to say a party, in that Church; and their lessons betrayed, in the eyes of the multitude, those signs of hesitation and inconsistency, which unauthorized teaching is apt to exhibit, and which so remarkably contrasted with the decisive and unflinching tone of the new doctrine.

Our Lord thus consecrated, from the first, the great principle of Authoritative Teaching. And can it be thought, for a moment, that He honoured it in His own Person merely to discredit it in His Church? For four thousand years, in one form or another, the claim of authority had been man's warrant for believing the revelations of God's Holy Word and Will. All teaching, whether it came direct from God, or was conveyed through specially appointed messengers, or was diffused through the medium of a dominant institution, had been alike authoritative and dogmatic in its character; not submitting itself to be tested by the judgment of the receiver, but asserting its right to be received in virtue of the authority upon which it was delivered, and of which it was ready, at any moment,

\* St. Matt. vii. 28, 29.

to produce the credentials. The Divine Founder of the Christian Church sanctions this mode of communicating His lessons to man, and Himself acts upon it. Is it conceivable that, on the expiration of His brief ministry, or, at least, upon the death of His immediate followers, this unspeakable boon of a security against doubt upon the most momentous of all questions should have been withdrawn from the Christian flock; and that they, the chosen of God, who were to carry on to the end of time the Truth which it had cost such pains and such sufferings to introduce, should be suddenly deprived of the light in its first dawn, and cast back upon a state of darkness, compared with which the twilight of the Elder Dispensation would have been as the beams of the noon-day sun? Wherefore all this apparatus of type, and all these announcements of prophecy, if it be but to usher in a dispensation which is to enlighten the few who witness its beginnings, at the expense of the many who are to live after its establishment; and to throw back the vast multitudes of its subjects upon processes of personal investigation, with no better clue to guide them through the labyrinth of inquiry than a collection of documents open to interpretations almost as various as the words they contain?

Nor is there anything in the New Testament to make us suppose that the light once given was to be thus speedily withdrawn; or that the method of inculcating Divine Truth has had to sustain so sudden and violent an innovation. Quite the contrary. Even before our Lord lifted up His voice on the Mount, He had taken the first step towards founding a great representative Institution, by calling into His service four of those, whom, &c.

a somewhat later period, He elected into the College of His Apostles.\* In due time, He nominates the whole Twelve, and delegates to them the office of authoritative Teachers, with the power of miracles as the guarantee of their claims. Their commission is conveyed to them in these words: "Going, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."† In process of time, our Lord strengthens this missionary force by the addition of seventy-two,‡ to whom, likewise, He gives power to preach and work miracles. These seventy-two appear to have received temporary "faculties" (as we now say) only, and to have returned to our Lord when they had done their work.§ But the Apostles had been appointed to a permanent office, which, after the Resurrection, was confirmed, amplified, and extended. At first, they were to preach to the Jews only, as distinguished from the Gentiles, and even the Samaritans.|| After the Resurrection, their mission was extended to the whole world. "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."¶ In other ways, also, the powers of the Apostolic body had been greatly increased. By the same act which gave them unlimited jurisdiction in preaching, they received also authority to administer the Sacrament of Baptism, as they had previously, at the Last Supper, been invested with the power of celebrating the Most Blessed Eucharist. And to this last investiture with power over the Real Body of Christ was added, after the Resurrection, another attribute of the

\* St. Matt. iv. 18, et seq.

† St. Luke, x. 1, &c.

|| St. Matt. x. 5.

† Ib. x. 7.

§ Ib. x. 17.

¶ St. Mark, xvi. 15.

sacerdotal office,—the power over His Mystical Body, or that of absolving from sin.\* See, now, what progress is already made towards the foundation of an hierarchical Church. Our Saviour, at His ascension, leaves a community in the world; “a little flock,” indeed, but thoroughly organized in its constitution as far as it goes, and with capacities of indefinite enlargement. The government of this body is no less elastic and expansive than are its powers of numerical increase. Its bonds of union are not natural, but spiritual; not local or temporary, but universal and eternal. First, the ties of kindred are broken in upon,† then the ties of country;‡ but, although this community is to have other than earthly aims, and to be united by other than earthly associations, it is to have its place of sojourn in the world, and its stability is to be secured by the same conditions as those held necessary to the permanency of mere worldly institutions. Baptism is the essential condition of entrance into it; Penance, of restoration to the rights of membership; the Holy Eucharist is its bond of union; the Apostles are its chief governors, with a world-wide jurisdiction.

And now, its Founder is withdrawn; and, directly afterwards, we find this little compact and well-governed community meeting together, under a consciousness of loss indeed, yet secured alike against confusion of counsels and despondency of spirit, by a promise of infallible and unfailing aid. Into that upper chamber are gathered, not the Eleven only, but other disciples, with the brethren of Jesus and his Mother. The little Church has

\* St. John. xx. 23.

† St. Luke, xiv. 26.

‡ St. Mark, xvi. 15.

an official and corporate act to perform,—the election of one of its governors. All proceeds in a regular and orderly manner; an Apostle rises, and propounds the subject of the conference: the suffrages are given, and the election is completed, declared, and carried out.\*

On the tenth day after our Lord's Ascension, the great Gift of Pentecost comes down upon the assembled brethren. Instinct with its inspiration, St. Peter rises with the Eleven, and opens the ministry of the Church, as his Divine Lord had begun His own, with the words of authority. "Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell at Jerusalem, *be this known to you, and with your ears receive my words.*"† Pass on to the end of this chapter, and you have the same tokens of a complete though incipient ecclesiastical organization, keeping pace with, or rather giving effect to, this authoritative teaching. "They, therefore, that received the word were baptized." Here is the essential condition of entrance into the Society. "And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles." Here you have undoubted evidence of unity in the Faith. Observe, especially, the expression, "*doctrine of the Apostles,*" and consider its full import. It manifestly implies something fixed, authoritative, and external to the mind of the receiver. A Catholic could not desire a phrase more suitable to express the Dogmatic Faith of the Church. But let us proceed with the words of the Inspired Narrative. They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, "and in the communication of the breaking of bread." Here is the great bond of Christian

\* Acts, i. 13, &c.

† Ib. ii. 14.

union,—the participation of the Most Holy Eucharist. But moreover, it is added, that they persevered “in prayers.” They had, then, a common worship, as well as a common Faith and common Sacraments. And now, a still further token of union and mutual charity: “All they that believed were together, and had all things common.” Their possessions and goods they sold, “and divided them to all, according as every one had need.”\* The same description of this growing society is given farther on,† with the additional fact, that the members of it did not distribute their goods, and the produce of the sale of their houses and lands, according to their own individual discretion; but “laid it down before the feet of the Apostles.” Here is an act, on the people’s part, of the most entire and confidential deference to authority. Moreover, we are told, that the characteristic of the Apostles’ preaching was, that it was “with great power.”‡ Such, then, is the Scripture account of the Apostolic Church, which applies (with allowance for local variations) to the Christian Church of the New Testament, whether as a whole or in its partial manifestations.

It will hardly be questioned that the teaching of the Apostles, as it is recorded in the History of their Acts, is of the kind which we have called authoritative or dogmatic. Indeed, I do not expect that you will meet my statements in the present discourse with a denial of this fact, but with a different answer altogether. Admitting the position that all the teaching of the Apostles was authoritative, you will deny that their case affords a precedent for an authoritative Church. This

\* Acts, ii. 41, &c. † Ib. iv. 32, &c. ‡ Ib. ver. 33.

objection I shall meet as we proceed. In the mean time you must suffer me to insist, almost to the extent of infliction, upon the fact, that the Apostles, whether in their missionary preaching, or in their Epistles, never permit their disciples to question their claims upon intellectual any more than moral submission. Out of the multitude of testimonies to this point which the Acts of the Apostles supply, I will select one above the rest, because it illustrates what has been said about teaching through the action of an organized body. The historical fact to which I allude is, the decree of the first Ecclesiastical Conference held at Jerusalem, and recorded in the Fifteenth Chapter of the Acts. A grave dispute had arisen in the Church, touching the obligation of the Gentile converts to observe the ceremonial law of Moses. This was one of those practical questions which directly involve doctrine. How do you think it would have been determined in the present Established Church of this country? Let me draw a picture, which I know must appear satirical; yet I assure you from my heart that the satire is not with me. Will not your own friends recognize such a picture as faithful? Your bishops would have "charged" on different sides. At length parties would have run high, and after an ineffectual reference to the metropolitan, a decision would have been sought in the Ecclesiastical Courts. As this decision would not have satisfied both sides, the defeated party would have appealed to the Privy Council; that is, (observe) the Council of the Civil Power. This final Court of Appeal would have pronounced that the matter was "an open question," and so have left it where it was at first. Next: how would

a similar controversy have been settled in the Catholic Church? The Catholic Bishops of England would have met, had it been a national question; or if a diocesan one, the Bishop of the Diocese would have taken counsel with his Chapter, and afterwards propounded the matter in a Diocesan Synod, and a decree would have been drawn up embodying the decision of the Diocese or Province. This document would have been referred to the Holy See for approval; and, that approval having been obtained, the united Episcopate of England (if a national or provincial), or the Bishop of the diocese (if a diocesan matter), would have promulgated the decree among their, or his, ecclesiastical subjects, and it would have become the law of that portion of the Church to which it related. And now, thirdly, what was the course adopted by the Apostles, and recorded in the history of the Bible? The scene of the dispute is Antioch. The Christians of Antioch depute Paul and Barnabas to go up to Jerusalem, where a Council is held. St. Peter is there, and pronounces his judgment upon the matter in debate. St. Paul and St. Barnabas also speak, and aid the decision of the question with the testimony of their missionary experience. These various judgments having been delivered, St. James, the local Bishop, expresses his own opinion with especial reference to the speech of St. Peter. Taking that speech, it would appear, as his authority, he quotes the Scriptures in attestation of it, and then pronounces his conclusion according to the tenour of St. Peter's argument. The judgment is taken down, and runs in ecclesiastical form: "The Apostles and Elders, &c., to the brethren that are



in Antioch, and in Syria, and in Cilicia, greeting. Forasmuch," &c. Then is given what in technical phrase is called, the preamble; then comes the judgment itself, expressed in very remarkable phraseology: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to Us." Next follows the execution of the order: Judas and Silas are deputed to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch; where, on their arrival, they publicly read the Decree, at which (because so authoritative a document was, no doubt, an immense relief to their consciences, and a complete protection against future doubt) we are told, that "they rejoiced for the consolation."\*

If to all this you reply, that St. Peter's position at this Council was by no means such as our theory requires, I must ask you to observe that, whatever force such an objection might have in reference to the Papal Supremacy (of which we are to speak later) it has no bearing whatever upon the present argument, which is intended to prove only that the Church of the New Testament was an organized body governed by the Apostles. Now, I have described two courses of proceeding exemplified in our own time in regard to controversies similar to that which led to the Council of Jerusalem, and I ask you which of the two is the more in accordance with Apostolic precedent,—that adopted by the Catholic Church of the present day, or that which obtains amongst yourselves?

The Acts of the Apostles carry the history of the Christian Church down to the second year of St. Paul's residence at Rome; where he received,

\* Acts, xv. 31.

as we read, all comers, "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence."\* From the character of an itinerant, he thus passes into that of a resident missionary; and appears to have filled a part in the Church remarkably similar to that of a later Apostle of Rome, the great St. Philip Neri. To ascertain the method in which he dealt with the different Churches under his Apostolic jurisdiction, as well as with Clergy who had authority in some of them, and with private individuals, we must look to those various Epistles which form so material a portion of the contents of the New Testament. No one, I think, who calls to mind the general tenour of these Apostolic Letters, will dispute, that the teaching they contain is authoritative, and not tentative, conjectural, of doubtful interpretation, or referred to the judgment of those to whom it is addressed, or to any other external standard whereby its truth or falsehood, reasonableness or unreasonableness, was to be tested. St. Paul, and those of his fellow Apostles whose writings have come down to us, are never found appealing to the Scriptures (so far as they then existed) as their rule of faith. They cite the Scriptures indeed, for the purposes of illustration and testimony; but content themselves with announcing truth simply upon their own word. They remind their disciples of doctrines which they had taught by oral communication;† they deduce practical lessons from these doctrines; they give authoritative directions, or enter their formal protest against existing abuses; but what they never do,

\* Acts, xxviii. 30, 31.

† 2 Thess. ii. 14.

from one end of their teaching to the other, is to send their disciples to the private study of a *document* however venerable, for the ascertainment of their religion or the solution of their practical difficulties.

Nor is this all. They speak, over and over again, of the Christian Faith as something fixed, definite, and objective. I will quote, in order, the principal of the passages in which the character of doctrinal Christianity is thus described, and leave them in your hands without comment, and in the firm conviction, that, as candid inquirers, you can take but one view of them; namely, that they imply an authoritative disclosure, a fixed doctrine, a body of revealed truth; in other words, a Creed; and such a creed as rests, not upon the variable opinions of man, but upon the basis of an infallible authority. To the Ephesians St. Paul speaks of "meeting in the unity of *the faith*;"\* and of "*one faith*," as no less the characteristic of Christians, than "one Lord," or "one baptism." The Philippians he warns to labour together with one mind for "*the faith of the Gospel*."† To St. Timothy he speaks of a man "denying *the faith* and being worse than an infidel."‡ Again, of times in which men shall "depart from *the faith*."§ To the same, of "erring from *the faith*."|| To St. Titus, of "*the common faith*."¶ St. Jude exhorts Christians to "contend earnestly for *the faith once delivered to the saints*."\*\* Yet more frequent with the Apostles is the phrase, "*the truth*," as expressive of the same thing. "The truth of Christ;" the

\* Eph. iv. 4, 5.

† Phil. i. 27.

‡ 1 Tim. v. 8.

§ 1b. iv. 1.

|| Ib. vi. 10, 21.

¶ Tit. i. 4.

\*\* St. Jude, 3.

"truth as it is in Jesus;" the "truth of the Gospel;" or "the way of the truth."\* The "truth" (by eminence), is set forth as the object of pursuit to those who have not attained it; of obedience, gratitude, and zeal, to those who possess it,—and this in passages far too numerous to quote in full.† But one text there is, peculiarly important among the rest. St. Paul, writing to St. Timothy, warns him how to comport himself in the house of God, meaning thereby, not the material building, but, as he goes on to explain himself, "*the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*"‡

The meaning of these phrases, "the Faith," or "the Truth," is still more clearly brought out by another word used in the New Testament to denote at once a disposition of mind, and a condition of character, opposite, respectively, to the temper which the Apostles inculcate in the passages just quoted, and to the position which they assume to be that of all good Christians. The word in question is, Heresy. This, as you are probably aware, is a scriptural, as well as a theological, term. It occurs both in its abstract and concrete forms, in several places of the New Testament. The Greek word from which it is derived, is, in your version, sometimes translated "sect," and sometimes "heresy;" it is applied to the doctrine of the Pharisees and

\* 2 Cor. xi. 10, et al.

† Gal. ii. 14; iii. 1; v. 7; Eph. iv. 15, 21; 2 Thess. ii. 10, 13; 1 Tim. ii. 4; iv. 3; vi. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 18, 25; iii. 7, 8; iv. 4; Tit. i. 14; Heb. x. 26; St. James, iii. 14; v. 19; 2 Pet. ii. 2; 1 St. John, ii. 21; 2 St. John, 1; 3 St. John, 3.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Sadducees,\* and to certain false systems of teaching, or corruptions of the Gospel.†

Now, this same word "heresy" embraces the whole of the present controversy, as one may say, in a nut-shell; and goes far, I may add, to settle it. I will go through its various significations, under the guidance of a Scripture lexicographer of great authority with Protestants, Professor Schleusner. "Heresy,"‡ he says, "is a word which has no invidious meaning in itself, and signifies 'choice,' or option, between two alternatives." "The word," he proceeds, "in its next sense, means 'a sect,' or body of persons who *choose for themselves*, embrace, and follow, the doctrine of some teacher, or some particular mode of life in preference to others;" and this, he adds, "either in a good or a bad sense." There are instances of choice within the limits of an established system, which we should express by the word "school," or "party." The sects of the Jewish Church were of this kind; or the "parties" in the English Establishment. Where St. Paul refers to "heresies" among the Corinthian Christians, he evidently alludes to parties of a dangerous tendency, yet still within the limits of the Faith; for he applies the term "schisms" to the divisions occasioned by them.§

And now, thirdly, our lexicographer brings us to a far worse instance of the exercise of "choice" in religion. "There are also false prophets among you," says St. Peter, "even as there shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in

\* Acts, v. 17; xxv. 5; xxvi. 5.

† 1 Cor. xi. 19; Gal. v. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Tit. iii. 10.

‡ αἵρεσις.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 18.

*sects* [or heresies] *of perdition.*"\* The original word for "sects" is still this same *hæresis*. Thus does our lexicographer bring this word from its innocent meaning of "choice, or option, between two alternatives," to the sense in which it denotes a state of mind, or fact of religious position, which carries a condemnation in the very word used to denote it. "Heresy," and "heretic," say what men will, are words of evil sound, which even I should be sorry to deal about at random; and which you, my non-Catholic hearers, would not like to be directed against yourselves. But what is this "Heresy," as we have traced the meaning of the term up from its etymology? It is the act of *exercising a choice* about our religion; or, in other words, the disposition of mind which induces persons to give scope to their liberty of judgment in matters beyond its province; or, the state of religious opinion which results from exercising such choice or using such liberty in an unlicensed way. And now, I will ask, in what phrase do you suppose, would the writers of the New Testament have expressed the "liberty of private judgment" in matters of faith? I think we must allow, beyond all question, that the word which would have come into their minds would have been this same ill-sounding, invidious term, Heresy. I confess, my hearers, painful as the inference may be to both of us, that if Protestantism be the religion of private judgment, "heresy" must be its Scriptural denomination.

Indeed, manifold as are the differences between the religion of the Bible, and that which, under

\* 2 St. Pet. ii. 1.

whatever variety of external form the majority of our countrymen profess, there is, perhaps, no single point in which this diversity is more apparent than in the estimate of religious error. Not only is this Scriptural word, heresy, banished from the vocabulary of every religious body in this country, except the Catholic (unless, indeed, as a description of the Catholic religion itself), but any kind of severity against doctrinal error, of whatever magnitude, is popularly branded under the odious names of "bigotry," or "intolerance." The Scriptural and Roman Catholic term, heresy, is replaced, in modern phraseology, by a most inadequate substitute, "dissent,"—a word which, it will be observed, implies that very right to differ from established doctrine, which heresy, in its proper meaning, condemns.

But it is not only by the use of this word, heresy, that the Bible vindicates the principle of an Infallible Truth; it is also most severe in its special denunciations of religious error. The Bible is the most intolerant (in the popular sense) of all books in the world. I am certain that if a Catholic theologian said, for the first time, what the Bible says about heresy and heretics, his language would be held up to public odium, in pamphlets, and parliamentary and platform speeches without end. "What think you," it would be said, "of a religious teacher who lays it down as an axiom, that unbelievers will be condemned to eternal torments?\*" Nay, of one who includes heresy, or sectarianism, in such a catalogue of crimes as the following: 'Idolatry, witchcraft, uncleanness, revellings, drunkenness,

\* St. Mark, xvi. 16; Apoc. xxi. 8.

and murder?"\* Who ever heard of scouting a man in society on account of his religious opinions? Yet you, Papists, have teachers who go the length of saying, that heretics are to be first re-proved, and then, if they persist in their heresy, avoided.† Then, only fancy refusing hospitality to a man because he happens to be a Unitarian! Yet, in the works of one of your arch-inquisitors, O ye persecuting Papists, we read as follows: 'If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine [of Christ], receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith unto him, God speed you, *communicateth with his wicked works.*'"‡ Now, of the passages I have just quoted in this imaginary harangue against Catholics, one contains the words of our Blessed Saviour; two, those of St. Paul; and the remaining two, those of St. John the Evangelist, the Apostle known among the rest, as the loving and beloved disciple, and the author of the well-known phrase, "God is Love." Which, then, of the two following courses, my non-Catholic hearers, will you adopt? Will you say that "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible," is against the truth of God, or will you candidly confess that it is against yourselves?

We have arrived then at this point. There are, in this country, three different recognized views of the way in which a man is to learn his religion. The one which I call the Protestant, is that which sends him to the Bible as the depository of all religious truth, and bids him either extract it as best he can, or ascertain the claims of the

\* Gal. v. 19, 21.

† Tit. iii. 10.

‡ 2 St. John, 10, 11.



doctrine he has learned from his youth up. Another, which, not because it is formally different from the preceding, but because it is popularly distinguished from it, I will call the Anglican, subjects the Bible, nominally, to the interpretation of the Fathers, but really, to the judgment of living teachers, who represent the meaning of those ancient commentators according to their own views of the truth. This latter view, as I have already stated, though Catholic in sound, is in effect Protestant, like the former, since the teacher must prove his right to interpret before he can force his interpretation upon others. The only remaining method is that of the Catholic Church, which alone of professedly Christian bodies claims to teach us our religion, in virtue of a commission which she has received from Christ, as the historical successor and present representative of the Apostolic Church. Now we are not here concerned with the question, whether this claim be well founded, but whether this method be Scriptural. The question of *claim* relates to what are called the Notes of the Church, and thus belongs to a separate subject. But as to the method of teaching, which is the matter before us, the two former of those just explained have not, as I hope to have shown you, a single particle of Scriptural evidence in their favour. No Catholic theologian ever taught more clearly against the sufficiency of the Bible, as a rule of faith, than does the Bible itself declare or imply against its own sufficiency. The New Testament covers the first century of the Christian era; and the Epistles of St. John, which were written towards the end of it, recognize, as we have just seen, the principle of dogmatic authority as plainly as the Sermon on the Mount.

If then, a theory of religious teaching, so essentially opposite to this, as that which is implied in the sufficiency of the Bible as the sole rule of faith, have any support in ancient precedent, when, I ask, was it first introduced? If it received no countenance in the First Century, did it come in during the Second, the Third, or the Fourth? Now that it had an origin immediately subsequent to the Scriptural era, even your own writers do not pretend; on the contrary, they date the corruptions of Popery, as they call them, from the very earliest of the post-apostolic eras. The Protestant historian Mosheim, writing of the *Second Century of Christianity* (that is, of a time when persons were living who had actually conversed with the Apostles), observes—

“There is no institution so pure and excellent which the corruption and folly of man will not in time” (observe this phrase) “alter for the worse, and load with additions foreign to its nature and original design. Such, in a particular manner, was the fate of Christianity. In this century” (the second, that is) “many unnecessary Rites and Ceremonies were added to the Christian worship, the introduction of which was certainly offensive to wise and good men.”

He proceeds to give Six Reasons for what he thus gratuitously calls “changes;” in the course of which he acknowledges, that thus early in the history of the Church Bishops had come to be called Pontiffs, and Presbyters, Priests; that the Holy Eucharist was esteemed a Sacrifice; that Baptism was given with many ceremonies; that images and other symbols were in use; that water was mixed with wine in the Eucharist; that in all probability the Holy Communion was ad-

ministered to children of tender age; and that the Bishop of Rome "took it into his head" to dictate to the Asiatic Bishops, and excommunicated them because they disputed his authority.\*

Such, my non-Catholic hearers, according to the testimony of your own writers, were the doctrines and practices of the Second Century of the Christian era. Were they corruptions of the Scripture religion, or its natural and legitimate developments? If the latter, you admit all I would affirm; if the former, then early ecclesiastical history, since it is a mere record of corrupt innovations, does but throw us back upon the Bible itself for the rule of religious teaching. And we are quite content to stake the issue upon its single testimony. Pass on now, from the Second Century to the Third, from the Third to the Fourth, and so on, and you will find not less (for that is impossible) but as little warrant for the Protestant theory as in the Second or the First. Not until you arrive at the Sixteenth Century do you find the principle of dogmatic authority openly denounced, and formally and extensively repudiated. Then, at length, you see the Bible wrested from the keeping of the Church, in whose hands it had ever been the minister of consolation and the safeguard of obedience, and used for the first time to violate the sanctuaries of authority and break down the defences of order. And worst of all, you find that sacred volume, like the Author of all Truth before it, insulted in its very state of captivity and degradation, and rudely bidden to "prophesy" in the sense, and at the dictation, of His enemies.

\* Mosheim, *Eccl. Hist. Cent. II. p. ii. c. iv. §§ 1, 6, 11, &c.*

## DISCOURSE XIII.

## THE CATHOLICITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

It will probably be admitted, on a review of the preceding discourse, that the Apostolic Church differed essentially from all Protestant systems in the mode of inculcating and perpetuating religious truth. But it may still be said that, in point of organization and discipline, that Church is not wholly without parallel among un-Catholic, and even anti-Catholic, institutions of the present time. Instances, it may be pleaded, are not wanting, either in Great Britain or on the continent, of churches, so called, or congregations, united by similarity of principles and the observance of common ordinances, and governed according to fixed laws by authorities bearing Scriptural names and discharging Apostolic functions. To quote the Established Church of England as a prominent example of such an institution would appear, in the judgment even of many among its own members, almost like satire. But the friends of the Scotch Kirk, for instance, of the Wesleyan Connection, of Protestant Churches abroad, and possibly of some other communities external to the Catholic, might any of them claim to be heard in defence of the pretensions of their several societies, without any such palpable incon-

sistency as would warrant us in setting their appeals at nought before examination.

I confess that I have no such acquaintance, or means of gaining acquaintance, with these religious bodies, as would warrant me either in affirming or denying their claim to a conformity with the Apostolic Model. But, as far as my present argument is concerned, I have no difficulty whatever in granting the very utmost which is demanded in their behalf, even by their most zealous advocates. Facts, indeed, appear to indicate that doctrinal differences of considerable magnitude are apt to prevail even in the more united of them; nor would this, I suppose, be denied even by their supporters. The claim of doctrinal unity would probably be conceded without much difficulty to the Catholic Church; but her pretension to be esteemed the *sole* representative of the Apostolic form of Church polity (which is the point in question), might be disputed, as I imagine, by some or all of the bodies just specified, with a considerable appearance of truth. Many of these societies present, no doubt, the external tokens of regular constitution and methodical arrangement. They recognize the principle of Synodical discussion; they exercise certain powers of ecclesiastical discipline; and, though they may not describe the offices of such as bear rule among them in Catholic phraseology, yet they may reply to objections founded on this omission, that the original words which the advocates of the episcopal form of government translate in their own way, and understand in a sense favourable to their own claims, admit, without any violence, of a less technical or exclusive meaning.

Yet one feature of the Apostolic Church of the New Testament there plainly is, which is not merely without counterpart, but without even the pretension to counterpart, in any but the Catholic community, not excepting even that which approaches infinitely nearer to the Scripture model than any Protestant Sect, Church, or Congregation in the world; I mean the Church of the mighty Russian empire. The feature in question is that from which the Church in union with the See of Rome receives its distinctive name—Catholicity. The most considerable of the non-Catholic religious bodies of the present time, namely, the Greek, Lutheran, and Anglican Churches, do not even lay claim to any but a national, as contradistinguished from a universal mission. Attempts have, indeed, occasionally been made, one very recently, on the part of Protestants in different countries, to combine for objects of a Catholic character; but they have always been signally unsuccessful. Protestantism, not having the *impetus* which results from possessing a positive truth of its own, can never succeed in forcing itself extensively upon the world, except under the cover, and with the aid, of the secular power. Hence you will find that Protestant bodies either rest in one place, and do their work in their own limited spheres, or that they make their way through the power of national influences. Here I allude, of course, to those bodies so far as they possess a separate form. I do not deny that Protestantism is aggressive enough in spirit; but it is aggressive in the way, not of building up, but of pulling down. It propagates no positive truth, and, except in countries where it is protected by the civil government, gains no

substantive footing, and is represented by no distinct institution, and therefore speedily dies away if worldly props be withdrawn from it. Thus the Anglican Church, for example, appears in Ireland and the British colonies as an Establishment; in the continental countries it is an adjunct of the English Embassy. There are, indeed, English Protestants in France, Spain, and Italy, but they are mere collections of individuals, who do not represent any institution, or any principle, except disturbance. There are, again, French Protestants who form an organized community in France, but they are protected and paid by the State. There are various Protestant sects in England, but they do not germinate any more than the Established Church, except within the limits of the British empire. In America, all religions are equally free, and independent of special state protection; but it is the Catholic alone which has world-wide relations, and claims a right to extend itself. Hence, after every admission which the advocates of Protestantism can reasonably, and do actually require, it remains true, that the Catholic Church alone is aggressive in virtue of her profession as a Teacher of mankind, and an Inheritor of Apostolic Truth. You find her in all countries alike; asserting her right of sovereignty, and maintaining her witness to a certain definite, ascertainable, and unchanging Faith; and this, with or without the protection of the civil power, or with less or more of such protection, according to circumstances. The Catholic Church kept her ground, and maintained her characteristic principles, in England under the Penal Laws; she is still among us, tolerated, though not encouraged, by the civil

power. In Ireland she is dominant, but still not established; in Austria, Spain, Italy, and Belgium, she is both dominant and established; in France she is declared by the State "the religion of the majority;" in Russia and Poland she is but tolerated; in Prussia encouraged, but not dominant; in America neither established nor dominant, but as free as the sects around her; in the British colonies, much as in England. And everywhere she is either locally organized, or depends upon a central organization of her own. She is represented, either in regularly constituted Churches, as in Italy, Belgium, France, Germany, America, Ireland, and, now, Holland and England; or in Apostolic Vicariates, or off-shoots of the central authority, as in Scotland, or British India.

From these specimens of the actual state of the Catholic Church in different countries, we gather that three attributes belong to her, and the point is to ascertain how far the same attributes attached to the Church of the Apostolic age. The Church now in union with Rome is evidently: 1. Self-sustaining; 2. Aggressive; 3. Catholic in aim and intention, as distinguished from being absolutely universal in extent and influence. For it must always be borne in mind that, in order to establish the Church's claim of Catholicity, it is not necessary to show more than that she has the capacity in her essential nature and constitution, of being universal. Now a little consideration will prove that both the two former attributes of the Church, namely, the power of independent action, and the tendency to propagate, are intimately connected with the third property of *catholicity*, or rather are implied



in it. All other religious systems, except the Catholic, are hampered in their action, and modified in their manifestation, by the fact of not professing a Catholic object, and not claiming to be the teachers of the Only Truth. On the contrary, a Church which claims universal dominion in virtue of her prerogative as Teacher of the One Truth, is necessarily both aggressive and self-acting. Her motto is that of the heathen conqueror, though with a nobler ambition,—

“Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum.”\*

A world-wide aim can be satisfied with nothing less than a world-wide sway; and till the Catholic Church is universal, she must of necessity be aggressive. Again, in the fact of the Church's Catholicity is involved her independence of mere human conditions of place and extent. When her Lord invested her with the right of unlimited dominion, He gifted her with the power of indefinite expansiveness; or rather we might say that these three attributes of self-sustaining strength, indefinite fructification, and illimitable empire, are all of them necessarily contained in the idea of a Spiritual Kingdom. It was in reference to the Catholicity of the future Church that our Lord said to the Woman of Samaria, “Woman, believe Me, that the hour cometh when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem adore the Father.”† The principle of nationality, as a restraint, whether upon the Church's range of influence, or freedom of action, received its

\* “Deeming nought done, if aught remain to do.”

† St. John, iv. 21.

death-blow in the annihilation of the Jewish economy.

The claim of the actual Catholic Church which we shall have the least difficulty in vindicating for her is that of aggressiveness. This peculiarity of our religion, so far from being denied by our adversaries, is among those which are the most commonly charged upon it in the way of objection. We all remember when, a few years ago, the term "aggression" was employed to denote a step on the part of the Catholic Church which involved nothing more nor less than the assertion of a right she has always claimed, to plant herself in any country of the world in her own way, and at her own time, without (necessarily) obtaining the leave of the civil power as a preliminary. No Catholic denies that this right is to be exercised with due moderation, and a regard to prudential considerations; and therefore the Church does not always press it while she claims it, any more than she renounces it by waiving it. But in the case referred to, the authorities of the Catholic Church considered in their wisdom that the time had arrived, not indeed for invading England with their religion (for that was done many hundred years ago), but for perfecting our ecclesiastical polity. The country took umbrage, and gave the name of an "aggression" to that which invaded no right in asserting one, established no new principle though it consolidated an existing one, and helped forward no power but that which all who "profess and call themselves Christians" should wish to see everywhere dominant, the power of Christ over sin and the world.

However, I am deviating from my subject,

which is, not to defend the Catholic Church either in her principles or in her deeds, but to prove that she is actually, as well as historically, the Representative of the Church of the Apostles. We have seen then, that, as she differs from all known religious bodies\* by professing to teach a certain definite Truth of which she claims to be the sole authorized guardian and the infallible expositor, so does she likewise differ from all (equally without exception) in asserting her right to carry this Truth into all nations, and to erect her standard in the midst of them as the claimant of an ubiquitous dominion. The question is, Does the Catholic Church herein follow the steps of Christ and His Apostles, as set forth in the New Testament, or has she chalked out a new way for herself? If her authority be usurped, at any rate, is it unscriptural? and if not unscriptural, when was the Scriptural method of Catholic aggression innovated upon, and the narrower principle introduced in its place?

For the answer to these questions we must look, first to the terms in which our Saviour gave His commission to the Apostles. Did He, in those terms, limit His Church by any geographical boundaries or fetter it by any temporal ties? On the contrary, nothing can be clearer than that He did not so restrict, or embarrass it. His words are most remarkable, as regards both the character of Gospel Truth and the nature of the Gospel Kingdom. It was just before our Lord's Ascension that, having summoned His Eleven Apostles to the mountain in Galilee, He addressed

\* Including even the Russian and Greek Schismatical Churches. See Ward on the Anglican Establishment, p. 73.

them collectively in the following words:—"All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going, *therefore*, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold, I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world."\* Observe, in the first place, the *basis* of this commission—"All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth." Here is the direct claim of an earthly as well as heavenly sovereignty, as the ground of a charge absolutely without any limits except those of the world itself. And as all the nations of the world form the province of this charge, what is its substance? To "make disciples of" (for this is the true meaning of the original Greek†) all, in all places, with the preliminary condition of baptism into the Faith of the Holy Trinity, and to instruct them in all that the Apostles had received upon their Lord's authority. Thirdly, what is the promise guaranteed upon these conditions? The abiding Presence of Christ to the end of time. Here, then, you have the three great characteristics of Catholic Teaching:—1. A body politic as its organ; 2. A dogmatic faith as its subject; 3. A promise of infallible direction as its pledge and title to submission.

It can hardly be necessary to remind you how abundantly this idea of the Church, as a universal and visible kingdom, is foreshadowed in the parables of the New Testament. On the one hand, these parables evidently refer to the *visible Church on earth*, because they describe it as made up of

\* St. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

† μαθητεύειν.

good and bad, and as destined to consist of this intermixture of the reprobate with the elect till the angels shall make the final separation. On the other hand, they represent this earthly and visible Church as a heavenly *kingdom*; a *kingdom*, that is, inasmuch as it is a body politic; a *heavenly kingdom*, inasmuch as its objects, ties, and sanctions are "not of this world." Now under what images is this kingdom represented in the parables? Under such as are peculiarly significant of its aggressive character, independent action, and capacities of universal extent. It is a Marriage Feast, the Master of which arbitrarily sends out his messengers in different directions to invite, and even compel, persons of various classes to his table.\* It is a net, into which are gathered all kinds of fishes.† It is the grain of mustard-seed, which, small at first, in course of time outgrows "all herbs," and affords shelter to the "birds of the air."‡ It is leaven, which transforms the mass into which it is introduced.§ The same idea of the Church as a world-wide, visible, and most influential society, is conveyed in such sayings as—"You are the salt of the earth."|| "You are the light of the world." "A city seated on a hill cannot be hid."¶ Or consider once more the description of the Church, which is implied in those affecting words of our Lord, spoken at the Last Supper:—"As Thou hast sent Me *into the world*, I also send them *into the world*. And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word

\* St. Luke, xiv. 16.

† Ib. ver. 32.

|| Ib. v. 13.

‡ St. Matt. xiii. 47.

§ Ib. ver. 33.

¶ Ib. ver. 14.

shall believe in Me: that they all may be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee, that *the world* may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”\* The prayer of the Eternal Son of God could not be offered in vain. Where then is its accomplishment? Where, but in the Catholic Church, is that visible exhibition of unity secured by an infallible authority, and manifested, not in this or that place, under this or that worldly government, but so universally, that “the world” itself may acknowledge the Divine Mission of its Author?

Indeed, the moment we admit that the Church has a commission to teach Christ’s Truth, we imply, as a necessary consequence, that her mission and scope *must* be Catholic. What a strange and preposterous idea, that the All-generous God, whose gifts are ever without stint of measure or partiality of operation, should stake the issues of this gift of all gifts upon the accident of human caprice, or subject its bestowal to the ever-shifting conditions of human power! that the Eternal Truth of God should be perilled upon a tyrant’s fickleness; or the limits of His Kingdom contract or expand, and its fortunes rise and fall, with the variations of worldly empire, and the fluctuations of national success!

The picture given us, in the New Testament, of the Apostolic Church, whether, in the Acts, of its missionary history, or in the Epistles, of its administrative policy, forms a most instructive commentary upon these various anticipations of its Catholic character, office, and destiny. It shows beyond question in what sense the Apostles understood, or rather were guided by the Holy

\* St. John, xvii. 18, &c.

Ghost to understand, their Divine Master's commission. You find them carrying the Gospel into all parts of the world, and planting churches in one city after another, evidently without regard to any consideration but that of the spiritual needs of the people. This is what I meant by "independent action." Did St. Peter ask permission of Herod before he began to address the Jewish multitude on the Day of Pentecost, or at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple? Or did St. Paul refuse to enter upon his missionary duties, after his conversion at Damascus, till he had first obtained the consent of the governor of the city, under Aretas the king? Had they done so, the former Apostle would never have been cast into prison; nor would the friends of the latter have found it necessary to let him down the walls of the city in a basket;\* but, on the other hand, the Church of Christ would never have grown in the strength of their testimony, nor have been watered by the dew of their blood.

Not only did the Apostles discharge their mission without first asking leave of the civil power, but they continued to discharge it after the civil power had interfered to put them down. And this they did by the express command of God Himself. For when Peter and John were cast into prison at Jerusalem, an angel was sent to release them, and bid them go again and speak to the people "the words of this life." They were brought up to judgment a second time, and reproached with their obstinacy; but Peter defended himself and his colleagues, on the ground that God was to be obeyed in preference to man.†

\* Acts, ix. 25.

† Ib. v. 29.

What then was the true cause of all the odium and obloquy against which the first preachers of the Gospel had to contend? Were they in any other sense "aggressive," than as "a necessity lay upon them," to preach a religion essentially opposed to the spirit and maxims of the world? Were they actuated by a seditious spirit, or were they naturally disrespectful to those who were in authority? You have but to read the noble defence which St. Paul made of himself before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, in order to learn in what sense only he was the preacher of an aggressive religion. With such zeal, tempered by meekness, did he plead the cause of his Master; with such wisdom and prudence did he press the claims of the Gospel, that he converted his judges into his advocates, touched the conscience of Felix with remorse, and "almost persuaded" Herod "to be a Christian." Precisely the same has been the course of the Catholic Church in modern times. She has marked out the scenes and modes of her operation for herself; she has not, indeed, risked the failure of what concerned the salvation of souls upon the prohibition of authorities who had no jurisdiction over her acts; but, on the other hand, she has been ready with a reason for the hope that is in her, so soon as her rights have been questioned, or her course of policy impugned; exhibiting in all her dealings with the powers of the world, a zeal for their welfare, in the place of a weak concession to their wholly irrelevant authority.

I come now to the last of the great characteristics in which the Church of the New Testament and the Catholic Church of the present day mutually correspond and differ in common from



every other existing body (with one exception, which I shall notice), including even that portion of the Russian and Greek Church which does not acknowledge the Papal claims. You will probably anticipate that this point of mutual contact and of common difference is in the department of church government.

Nothing, I think, can be more obvious, as matter of antecedent likelihood, or rather certainty, than that a community, Catholic in its object, should be governed by an authority with a universal jurisdiction. Whatever be the subordinate grades of ecclesiastical rank or office, however numerous the separate circles of collateral influence, it would seem natural to expect that this vast machinery would have some primary cause of motion, visible like itself; these complex operations be subjected to some diffusive superintendence; these lesser spheres depend upon some common centre. I own I see no escape from the conclusion, that a world-wide religion must have a world-wide government. Indeed, this principle seems to be conceded in the practice of those religious bodies which protest most strongly against the Papal power. Wherever that power is cast off, the rejection is made in favour of a royal or imperial supremacy; that is, of a supreme authority co-extensive with the limits of the body which is to be governed. What was Henry the Eighth, or what is the Emperor of all the Russias, but a kind of Pope with sovereign power, but a limited jurisdiction? The principle is the same in both cases; the difference turns merely upon the capacities and extent of the systems to be governed, which in the one case are bounded by the limits of the nation, in the other, by those only of the world itself.

Or if, instead of the Protestant, we take the Anglican theory of church government, the conclusion is equally favourable to us. This theory subjects the Church to a multitude of separate jurisdictions, but each smaller jurisdiction to the control of one wider than itself. From the judgment of the diocesan, there is an appeal to the metropolitan authority; and did the limits of the Anglican Church extend beyond the British dominions, its theory would not only allow, but require, the recognition of a patriarchal as a check upon the metropolitan power. But if the episcopal and metropolitan authorities require a counterpoise, why not the patriarchal also? Grant, then, but that the province of Christianity is not a patriarchate but a world, and the patriarchal authority swells by natural consequence into the Papal.

Certain at any rate it is, that the Apostles were not mere bishops (that is, as to jurisdiction), nor mere archbishops, nor mere patriarchs. They had not a diocese, nor a province, nor even a patriarchate, for their several spheres of administration; but each of them had power throughout the whole Church. St. Paul addresses no less than seven separate Churches in the language of Apostolic authority; the Churches of Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Colosse, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Rome. See what an extent of ground this district covers on the map, and you will have some idea of an Apostle's jurisdiction. Moreover, he assumes authority, not only over congregations but over bishops; for St. Timothy and St. Titus were bishops respectively of Ephesus and Crete. In argument with such as quarrel with the name of bishop, I do not contend for that name; but

anyhow, no one can read through the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, without seeing that the power vested in those disciples in their respective Churches was, in fact, episcopal, call it by what name we may. Nor are these the only evidences of a Catholic jurisdiction on the part of the Apostles. Besides the Epistles of St. Paul, we have others written by several of the original Twelve:—St. James the Lesser, St. Peter, St. Jude, and St. John; and these Epistles are known by the name “Catholic,” on account of their having been addressed by their Apostolic authors to all the Christian world without distinction.

On the subject, therefore, of ecclesiastical government, the New Testament gives, as I conceive, the most unequivocal evidence of a power in the Christian Church which, as far as I know, has received no recognition in any part of the non-Catholic world, if we except one body of religionists, whose private virtues and unostentatious demeanour entitle them to great respect, and whose name is associated with the memory of the late Mr. Irving. The power in question is the Apostolical, as a supplement to the Episcopal.\*

If then the Catholic Church of the present day be a faithful transcript, or rather historical successor, of the Church of the New Testament, she will include, among other instances of conformity to the primitive model, a representation of the element of Apostolical jurisdiction. The Established Church (at least that section of it which contends for its Catholic and Apostolical character) maintains

\* Vide Dr. Newman’s “Loss and Gain,” c. vii.

that this element is represented in her Episcopate, and accordingly styles her bishops "successors of the Apostles." But a moment's reflection will convince us that the Apostles had no "successors" (in the plural number) as to that especial power which they possessed in distinction from bishops—universal jurisdiction. There is no such thing as a "universal Bishop," and even the Pope of Rome has always disclaimed such a title. The jurisdiction of a Bishop is limited by the very nature of his office; and a "universal" jurisdiction is the function, not of episcopal, but of Apostolical authority. Observe, I do not say that there is any *order* in the Christian Church above the episcopal; for it is the highest. I am not speaking of order but of government. Neither do I deny that there is a certain true and Catholic sense in which bishops are "successors of the Apostles;" only it is not in the sense of their representing the Apostolate as to jurisdiction.

The state of the case then, as far as the history of the New Testament is concerned, seems to be this. There were originally Twelve Apostles, who, by the fall of Judas Iscariot, were reduced to Eleven. The number, twelve, was restored by the election of St. Matthias.\* To these twelve St. Paul was afterwards added as a supernumerary, with St. Barnabas.† All the Apostles had universal jurisdiction in the Christian Church. The Apostles died off one by one; Martyrs all but the last survivor, who was St. John the Evangelist. But in the whole number of the Apostles, there was one who, besides sharing the powers of the rest, had special prerogatives, not only as

\* Acts, i. 26.

† Ib. xiii. 2.

compared with, but in respect of, his fellow-Apostles. That Apostle had received from his Divine Master not merely a primacy of rank, but a specialty of authority among, and over, his brethren, together with the further power of making this authority perpetual in the Church through a personal transmission of it, with all which was involved in it, to his lineal descendants in the See which he filled during his earthly life.

Such is the Catholic theory of the Apostolate; in stating which I am necessarily compelled to anticipate my subject. The Scripture evidence to the Papal claims will occupy us in our next Discourse. In the present stage of the question I have no right to assume more concerning those claims than that, at any rate, if they can be substantiated, they will furnish a perpetual representation of the Apostolic element of a universal jurisdiction. And this is a preliminary note in their favour, in an argument designed to show that the Church of the Bible and the present Church Catholic are one and the same body in different periods of its history and different phases of its manifestation.

## DISCOURSE XIV.

ST. PETER.

WE have now seen that the Apostles governed, as well as taught, the Church of the New Testament. But they must have so governed it upon some definite principle of mutual relation, or, as we should now say, according to a certain constitution. What then was that constitution? The Apostles certainly did not administer the government of the Church in common, for we never read of their being all together after the Day of Pentecost. Neither this, nor any other kind of united government of the Apostolic Church, has ever been even alleged. The only theory on the subject is our own, which gives one of the Apostles a supreme authority. We are now to see how far this theory is borne out by the testimony of the Bible.

There is certainly a strong presumption, antecedent to all proof on the other side, that the universal jurisdiction over the Christian Church, exercised by the several Apostles, would devolve in some form or other upon their successors. For we have seen that the necessity for a jurisdiction thus extensive was founded, not in anything peculiar to the Apostolic age, but in the very nature of the commission with which the Church is intrusted, and of the office which she has to fulfil,

A Catholic Church is the only proper guardian, witness, and preacher of a Gospel which, at the very time of its first introduction, was announced to be "for all the people;"\* and a Catholic Church seems to require, as the necessary condition of its successful operation, a ubiquitous authority and a supreme court of appeal, the jurisdiction of which shall be coextensive with the actual sphere of the Church's ministry.

But if it be granted that the Apostolical polity, being the only one suited to a Catholic Church, was likely to be perpetuated, it will not be difficult to show that the *form* in which it would be transmitted to after ages would probably be the monarchical.

The monarchical form of government was actually that under which the Christian flock was first gathered, and remained till our Lord's Ascension. It is, moreover, that which is constantly shadowed forth under the various figurative representations which our Lord gave of His Church. The Church of the Gospel is sometimes a Vineyard, sometimes a Household, sometimes a Flock, but, oftenest of all, a Kingdom; images which alike presume the government of one.† To reply, that in all these descriptions of the Christian polity reference may be made to the invisible headship of Christ our Lord, might have been a plausible objection in an

\* St. Luke, ii. 10.

† In order not to seem guilty of an unacknowledged plagiarism from the work of the eminent Father Passaglia, on the Prerogatives of St. Peter, I am bound to say that the whole of this portion of the present Discourse was written as it stands, before I had even seen F. Passaglia's book, from which I found, to my great encouragement, that some of these arguments had the sanction of his high authority.

earlier stage of our argument; but we have, I hope, outrun the time at which it is likely to be advanced. We have seen abundant reason for concluding that the Church of the New Testament, at any rate, was a visible institution, united by visible ties and governed by visible authorities; and there can obviously be no difficulty in admitting that, if it have a visible administration, it may have a visible head. There is no preliminary objection to the idea of our Divine Lord having appointed one Vicar to represent Him, which does not equally apply to His having appointed twelve delegates with co-ordinate supreme power. On the other hand, if He always speak of His Church under images which presuppose a kingly government, any other form of *visible* constitution would clash with His words, although those words would still, no doubt, be consistent with the theory of a purely *invisible* Church, could such be reconciled with the plain language of the New Testament.

Again, in default of any Scriptural proof whatever that the Apostles were *each* to have successors to their own universal powers, the old argument in favour of monarchical government would hold good in the case of the Church,—that it is easier to find one capable of supreme power than many.

We are prepared, therefore, to expect that the universal jurisdiction over the Church, exercised by the Apostles severally during their lives, would afterwards centre, and be represented, in a single head; and such is proved by the earliest ecclesiastical records to have been actually the case. One See is found, immediately after the Apostolic age, to take the lead in the interpretation of doctrine, in the determination of disputed questions



of discipline, in the correction of abuses, and in all else which pertains to the office of a presiding authority, and an appellate jurisdiction. This power is exercised, not, indeed, without protest or remonstrance from other quarters ; but the protests are overruled, and the remonstrances become rarer and feebler as time goes on, while the power itself is continually more and more deepened, extended, and consolidated.

The See by which these prerogatives are claimed, and to which they are conceded, is that of Rome, founded and first occupied by St. Peter ; and the question which arises is, whether these claims form the legitimate result and historical sequel of the powers vested in St. Peter by his Divine Master, and exercised by him during his personal ministry, or whether, on the other hand, they were, and have ever since been, usurped in infringement of our Lord's commission, and in contradiction to Apostolic precedent ?

Now I think every attentive reader of the Acts of the Apostles must acknowledge that, if St. Peter's supremacy be a usurpation, St. Peter himself was the first to usurp it. Read over the fifteen first chapters of the Acts, and tell me candidly whether, if St. Peter had been a Pope, he would have taken a more prominent and decided part in the government of the Church ? It has been well said that the Acts of the Apostles, as far as these earlier chapters are concerned, might suitably have been called the " Acts of St. Peter," so conspicuously does that Apostle stand out, on all occasions, as the spokesman of his brethren, and the champion of the Church at large. Will you say that the explanation of this fact is to be found in St. Peter's natural impetu-

osity of character? But remember, we have now passed the time when the Apostles, in that unrestricted freedom of intercourse which their gracious Lord allowed to them while He was on earth, were accustomed to speak out upon the impulse of the moment, and to manifest, like simple children in the company of a loving and indulgent parent, the feelings, and even foibles, of their as yet undisciplined minds. The solemn lessons of the Passion had now corrected their judgments and sobered their views: and none of the Apostles had profited by that "sifting" discipline more than St. Peter himself. They had seen, and spoken with, their risen and glorified Master; they had partaken once and again of His sacramental Self; they had "done"\* as he did, and bade them do, at the Last Supper, "in remembrance of Him;" they had been visited with His peace on the great day of the Resurrection; breathed upon by His Spirit on the days that followed; more especially had St. Peter's love been sounded, and proved a strong foundation whereon to build the great Apostolic charge; and now the crown is about to be put to these memorable privileges and these transforming gifts by the mission of the Divine Paraclete. The Apostles, though still liable to personal imperfection, were other men than they had before been; and all that they now did bore the impress of the Spirit who had descended on the head of each on the day of Pentecost in the form of "parted tongues, as of fire." With these facts in our minds, let us proceed to review the Apostolic acts of St. Peter.

When the Christian community was assembled on the days intervening between our Lord's

\* The original Greek word implies "sacrifice."

Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, you read that all the Apostles were there; each is mentioned by name—Peter, as usual, at the head of the list.\* Who is it that opens the deliberations of the widowed Church, proposes the subject of debate, and prescribes the course of proceeding? It is St. Peter. On the day of Pentecost, again, who is it that undertakes the defence of the calumniated brethren? The Twelve, indeed, rise up, but it is Peter who speaks in their behalf. He rose, it is said, “with the Eleven,† and lifted up his voice,” an expression very similar to that in which the opening of our Lord’s Ministry is described,‡ and used, I think, when it is intended to denote that the speech it introduces is peculiarly important and authoritative. The hearers are convinced, and touched with compunction; how do they act? They say to “Peter and the rest of the Apostles,” § (a very remarkable phrase surely), “What shall we do, men and brethren?” The Apostolic answer is conveyed through the medium of St. Peter,—“Peter said to them.” A great miracle is wrought. Peter and John are associated in the divine work, but Peter is the immediate agent. A powerful sensation is produced among the people, and the opportunity has to be turned to account. Again it is Peter who addresses the people. The authorities interfere, and the Apostles are summoned before the council. It is Peter who vindicates them. Peter and John are severally accused, and unite in defending themselves; but John, though he could speak in the power of the Holy Ghost

\* Acts, i. 13.  
 ‡ St. Matt. v. 2.

† Ib. ii. 14.  
 § Acts, ii. 37.

when necessary, waives his right in Peter's favour. Yes, it was not that the Apostles wanted eloquence, for their Master had promised that it would always come with the occasion. And with what a gushing torrent of words did they commemorate God's mercies and supplicate His favour, when Peter and John "revealed all that had happened to them."\* St. Peter took the lead neither as the more eloquent, nor as the more forward; for the gifts of the Holy Ghost went far towards assimilating tempers, and equalizing natural faculties. He asserted, without one word of protest on the part of his brethren, the prerogative of a superior authority.

The part taken by St. Peter at the Council of Jerusalem, the particulars of which are given in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, is a proof of the natural way in which he asserts this prerogative, and of the deference usually paid to his authority. I mention this the rather, because I know that this incident in the Apostolic history is sometimes used as an argument against us. It is said that the decision of that council was propounded, not by St. Peter, but by St. James the Lesser. But let me beg your attention to the facts. At this council, Peter, as usual, takes the lead in the discussion, and virtually determines the question. There had, we read, been "much disputing," when at length Peter rises and rules the point in debate without opposition. His word had the effect of an oracle. Immediately the debates were at an end, and "all the multitude held their peace."† St. Peter gives his judgment on the matter in hand, and that

\* Acts, iv. 22, &amp;c.

† Ver. 12.

judgment forms the basis of the decision, and of the Decree in which the decision is embodied. And St. James, although the last speaker, founds his opinion expressly upon the judgment of St. Peter.

Though it is my purpose to let objections, as a general rule, stand over to the end of my work, yet, as I am about to introduce one or two more incidents from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, bearing upon St. Peter's prerogative, I will take this opportunity of explaining a passage which may seem, at first sight, to militate against the Catholic hypothesis. It is said\* that the Apostles "sent Peter and John" into Samaria, to impart the Holy Ghost to the converts who had already received baptism at the hands of Philip the Deacon. To send another on an errand, it is objected, is an act of authority, but to be so sent is an act of submission; how then is Peter the head, who is here the minister? Then it is added, Do bishops in the Catholic Church take upon themselves to order off the Pope upon occasions, as if he were their subject? In reply, I wish to observe, first, that the Apostles did not employ St. Peter on an errand (which is indeed the act of superiors towards an inferior), but nominated him, with St. John, to a most important mission. This is an act which inferiors may, and continually do, perform towards a superior. Nothing is more frequent than for bodies, whether ecclesiastical or political, to depute their president to represent them on a special embassy. For example, it has happened, in my own experience, that an ecclesiastical chapter has sent its principal

\* Acts, viii. 14.

officer to represent it at a Synod.\* I wish you, in the next place, to reflect on the peculiar importance of this mission to Samaria. The object of it was one which called, if any object could call, for the presence of the chief Apostle. It was nothing less than to inaugurate the great Sacrament of Confirmation, an occasion, surely, to call for the most august representation which the Apostolic college could receive. And, lastly, I must remind you of a point which must never be forgotten throughout this argument. The other Apostles did not bear to St. Peter the same relation which Catholic bishops bear to the Sovereign Pontiff. They had not a diocesan jurisdiction,† but one equal in geographical extent with his own. Hence there is nothing in the Catholic Church of later times which corresponds with the very peculiar position in which the other Apostles stood towards St. Peter. This circumstance bears intimately upon the whole question of the Supremacy, and we shall have occasion to recur to it.‡

We pass now to the *judicial* authority exercised by St. Peter in the Apostolic Church; one great instance of which is connected with his mission to Samaria, related in the eighth chapter of the

\* A still more pertinent case in point would be that of a Cabinet nominating the Prime Minister to represent it at a foreign court, as was actually in contemplation in England a year ago.

† See F. Passaglia on the Supremacy, *passim*.

‡ The great Protestant objection to the Supremacy of St. Peter, founded upon the Epistle to the Galatians (c. ii.), cannot be considered in this place at sufficient length, and the reply to it (furnished, as it stands, by a friend) has been thrown into the form of an appendix.

Acts.\* When Simon Magus had seen the effects of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples, to whom the Apostles Peter and John had imparted the Gift, he was filled with the desire of obtaining the same power with the Apostles, and impiously proposed to purchase that power with money. It is St. Peter who pronounces sentence upon him, and enjoins the necessary penance.† But what is still more to our point, St. Peter alone of the Apostles, exercises judicial power over human life. At the word of his sentence Ananias fell down dead. And, to leave no doubt that this terrible visitation was the effect of the Apostolic verdict, the inspired narrative proceeds to tell us that in addressing Saphira, the wife of Ananias, and the partner of his crime, Peter said, "Behold, the feet of them who have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out." Whereon, "immediately, she fell down at his feet and gave up the ghost."‡

It is still in confirmation of the same argument, that when the Gospel is to be extended to the Gentile world, St. Peter is the one of all the Apostles selected for the great mission. His importance in the Apostolic body made him at once the mark for persecution, and the subject, in a peculiar manner, of the intercessions of the Church. St. James was seized by Herod, and God suffered the tyrant to prevail, and conferred on the Apostle the crown of martyrdom.§ Seeing that the Jews were pleased by this act of cruelty, Herod's next step was to apprehend Peter and imprison him. But Peter had more work to do

\* Ver. 14.

† Acts, viii. 19—22.

‡ Ib. v. 9, 10.

§ Ib. xii. 2.

for his Master, and therefore God, moved by the prayers of a united Church, sent an angel to deliver him from prison, and he was restored to his brethren. The blessing seemed to them too great to be even possible. At first they thought the messenger beside herself, and then pronounced that it must be "his angel."\* The tyrant, having now filled up the measure of his iniquity, is arrested by the hand of God in the plenitude of his pride and amid the flattery of his courtiers; an angel strikes him, as if in antithesis to the recent supernatural deliverance of his holy victim; he is attacked by a loathsome disease, and ends his career of persecution against the Church by a miserable and degrading death. "But the word of the Lord," it is directly added, "increased and multiplied."†

Taking these facts one with another, I think you must admit that they go far towards the following conclusions. That St. Peter acts a leading part in the counsels of the Apostolic Church, which it is impossible to explain upon any theory but that of his pre-eminence in the Apostolic College. That he determines important questions, and that his judgment is accepted by his brethren as final. That no great apostolical work is undertaken without him, while some are intrusted to his single administration. That the power of life and death (the especial prerogative of sovereign authority) is exercised by him alone. That his presence is regarded as peculiarly important to the Church; indeed, as the hinge upon which its fortunes turn. One testimony more, and I have done with this part of my subject.

\* Acts, xii. 15.

† Ib. ver. 24.



You know in what veneration *all* the Apostles were held by the devout multitude of believers. Now, then, consider the following evidence of the faith reposed in St. Peter by name :—"By the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.....And the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord was more increased: insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when PETER came, his *shadow at the least* might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities."\* Why this special mention of St. Peter? Why this popular impression that *his* very shadow could effect these miraculous cures? Was it superstition? Then why record it without a word or hint of censure? Or was it not rather a well-grounded faith in St. Peter's individual power? Then, which is nearer to the Church of the Bible; we, who count it a blessing to live under the shadow of St. Peter's lineal successor, or you, who haply regard our faith as an "unscriptural" delusion?

But, now, did St. Peter thus claim authority which his Divine Master had not bestowed upon him? Turn to the Four Gospels, and you have an answer to this question.

The first point in favour of a distinction between St. Peter and the other Apostles which must strike every one who receives God's word in simplicity is, that in every list of the Twelve he is mentioned before the rest. There are four such lists in the course of the New Testament; one in St. Matthew's Gospel, one in St. Mark's,

\* Acts, v. 14, 15.

one in St. Luke's, and one in the Acts of the Apostles, of which St. Luke is also the inspired author. These catalogues, as all will admit who refer to them, are made out on some principle of order, and this principle is either that of priority in vocation or precedence in rank and authority. Your commentators say it is the former, and that St. Peter is always placed first as having been the first called. To this it may be replied—first, that there is no Scripture proof whatever of St. Peter having been called before his brother St. Andrew; but on the contrary, the proof is obviously in favour of St. Andrew having been called before him. It is evident that these two Apostles had become disciples of our Lord before they were called into His immediate service at the Sea of Galilee.\* We read that Andrew had joined the ministry of St. John the Baptist,† and the text of the Bible makes it clear that he believed on our Lord when he first saw Him in company with the Baptist, and followed Jesus home. The first act of Andrew after becoming acquainted with our Lord, was to find his brother Simon and bring him to Jesus, who greeted him with the memorable words, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter." From that moment St. Peter was pledged to Christ, though he did not then join Him. On the day following, our Lord called Philip, and then Bartholomew. All these disciples certainly received a more solemn, or, as it may be termed, official, call at a later period. On the second occasion Peter and Andrew were addressed together, but Peter was designated, as

\* St. Matt. iv. 18, 19.

† St. John, i. 40, 41, 42.

we may say, to the Apostleship, when he received from our Lord (according to the precedents of ancient date) a new name upon being elected to a special office in the Divine dispensation.

But, again; if these lists of the Apostolic College be constructed on the principle of priority in vocation, how is it that the order of vocation is violated in other instances? St. Matthew and St. Luke (in his Gospel) give Andrew the next place to Peter, and St. Luke (in the Acts) places James and John before Andrew; but St. Mark (generally a close follower of St. Matthew) and St. Luke, in the same list, set John before James. Three lists place Philip and Bartholomew after the four first, but St. Luke (in the Acts) inserts the name of St. Thomas between them. St. Matthew, with characteristic humility, places "Matthew the publican" after St. Thomas, and he is followed herein by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles; but St. Mark and St. Luke (in his Gospel) invert this order of enumeration. St. Simon the Zealot is set the last but one in three of the catalogues; but, in the fourth, he is given precedency over St. Jude, or Thaddæus. In fact, there are but two points in which all these lists agree; in putting St. Peter first, and Judas Iscariot last. Which of the two interpretations is favoured by these facts? Obviously not that of priority of call, but of precedence in dignity.

It is observable, too, that St. Peter's name is introduced by each of the three Evangelists who enumerates the Apostles with a certain kind of emphatic commentary. St. Matthew says, "First" (or rather "the first") "Simon, who is called Peter." St. Mark,—“To Simon He gave the name Peter.” St. Luke,—“Simon, whom He

surnamed Peter.” St. Luke’s list in the Acts is not a formal catalogue, but a mere incidental enumeration; and in it St. Peter’s name is simply prefixed to the others without any comment.

I now pass to the eminent marks of favour with which this Apostle was signalized by his Divine Lord, independently of the special office assigned him. In company with St. James and St. John, he is taken up by our Lord into the Mount of Transfiguration;\* admitted to witness the great miracle of the raising of Jairus’s daughter,† and brought close to the Agony in the Garden.‡ He is also accorded a special Appearance after the Resurrection. The particulars of this appearance are not indeed stated, but the fact itself may be gathered by certain inference from the text of Scripture. When the two disciples who met our Lord on the way to Emmäus related that incident to the Eleven at Jerusalem, they added—“The Lord is risen indeed, *and hath appeared to Simon.*” And all doubt upon the subject is cleared up by the Epistle to the Corinthians, where St. Paul, specifying the different appearances of our Lord after His Resurrection, has these words:—“Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and . . . was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: and . . . was seen by Cephas, *and after that by the Eleven.*”§ This Appearance, then, according to St. Paul, was the first of those made to the Apostles.

While on this part of the subject, I cannot but direct your attention to the very remarkable words in which Mary Magdalene and

\* St. Matt. xvii. 1.

† St. Mark, v. 37.

‡ St. Matt. xxvi. 37.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, 5.

the other pious women who visited the Holy Sepulchre are instructed by the Angel-watch to announce the fact of the Resurrection to the followers of Jesus. "Be not affrighted," said the celestial messenger to the women; "you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell *His disciples, and Peter*, that He goeth before you into Galilee."\* "His disciples, and Peter:" what a memorable testimony to St. Peter's place among the Apostles! Was not Peter himself a "disciple"? Then why is he mentioned apart from the rest, unless it were on account of some personal distinction above and beyond his brethren? When we Catholics speak of the "Blessed Virgin and the Saints," we mean that the Blessed Virgin, though a Saint, was far more, in that she was our Lord's Mother. Your commentators evidently feel St. Peter a great difficulty in their way. They are for ever finding explanations of the texts which, in the most obvious meaning of the words, support his Apostolic prerogatives. The natural impetuosity of his character serves their purpose in accounting for the prominence given to him in the Gospel narrative. But this plea does not explain what is a far more important fact in the question,—his appearance in the Acts. In the same way they tell us that those very remarkable words of the Angel (as they evidently feel them to be) have a reference to St. Peter's recent fall, and to the necessity under which he lay of some especial consolation at our Lord's hands. Now this is what I call being wise above what is written.

\* St. Mark, xvi. 6, 7.

There is not one single word in the Bible to warrant this construction, and I wonder whether your commentators have learned it by a special revelation? Of course, if the Catholic Church be wrong at all events, and if there be something abhorrent from natural piety, or contradictory to the revealed word of God, in supposing St. Peter to have been the chief Apostle, in that case we must tax our imaginations to devise some meaning for the words "His disciples and Peter," which gives St. Peter no place above the other Apostles. But in the absence of any such insuperable bar to the reception of the Catholic teaching on this subject, it is more probable, surely, that all these passages together should bear in one direction, and mutually illustrate each other, than that each separately should have to be distorted into some one or another unnatural form, in order to fall in with the general principle that any alternative is preferable to that of supposing "Rome" to be possibly in the right.

Indeed, our agreement at the beginning was, that we should take our stand upon "the Bible without note or comment," and endeavour to determine what sense it would bear in the eyes of one approaching it without prejudice on any side, and with a sincere desire of arriving at the truth. Now, I really do think it would never occur to the mind of such a reader to understand the various passages in which St. Peter either assumes an authority above the other Apostles, or has peculiar prerogatives accorded to him, in any other than the Catholic sense.

But while I deprecate, throughout my argument, a recourse to external commentaries (and quite as much upon my own side as upon yours),

one mode of illustrating Scripture there is which must be excepted from this general rule ; that is, the making the Bible its own commentator. Now, it so happens, that in another part of the New Testament, there is an expression remarkably similar to that used by the Angel-watcher at the Holy Sepulchre, in deputing the pious women to announce the Resurrection of our Lord to His brethren ; and in that expression, precedence of authority is plainly *intended*, and nothing else. The Angel-watcher says to the women—"Go, tell His disciples, *and Peter*." What says St. Peter himself, when he is delivered from prison, and desires that the joyful event may be announced to the Church at Jerusalem ? His words are—"Tell these things *to James, and to the brethren*."\* To James, that is, as the local Bishop especially, and to the rest, collectively. I anticipate your reply. You will say that, whereas James is mentioned before the brethren, Peter is named after the rest of the disciples. But surely such an enumeration may be made upon the principle of a *climax*, as well as upon that of a *bathos*. A Catholic would say, "the Bishops and the Pope," quite as naturally as "the Pope and the Bishops." Moreover, I have already directed your attention to a passage in which St. Peter and the other Apostles are mentioned in the reverse order :—"Peter standing up *with the Eleven*."†

But it is not as if such incidental testimonies stood alone ; it is not as if we could view them as insulated and apart from those memorable passages in which our Lord, in plain terms, confers on St. Peter those very prerogatives which these

\* Acts, xii. 17.

† Ib. ii. 14.

incidental passages presume. To these I will now invite your especial observation.

“And Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and He asked His disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.”\*

Compare this promise of building the Church upon the “rock” of Peter with the words in which that Apostle was addressed by our Lord at his first interview with Him. “Jesus looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter”† (that is, a stone, or rock). What candid inquirer is there, but must see in these words an anticipation of the great promise just mentioned, and in that promise a direct reference to the name specially and by divine appointment conferred upon this Apostle as a standing memorial of his call to his peculiar office in the Church?

\* St. Matt. xvi. 13—19.

† St. John, i. 42.



It is much to be observed, also, that the name given by our Lord to St. Peter (unlike similar names given to other Apostles, such as the sons of Zebidee), became the *permanent* designation by which he was known; nor can we forget that "a Rock" is the very scriptural type of our Lord Himself.\*

I will now crave your particular attention in behalf of a passage which to my own mind is one of the strongest, though not the most prominent, or the most trite, of these testimonies to St. Peter's prerogative with which the Bible abounds; and in alluding to it I have the advantage of being able to refer you to the illustration which that passage has received from your own commentators. I allude to the words addressed by our Blessed Lord to St. Peter at a very solemn moment; immediately after the institution of the Holy Eucharist. "There was," as we read, "a strife among the Apostles which of them should seem to be the greater." Our Lord reproved them for introducing into His Divine Kingdom the ambitious and contentious spirit of the world. "You," He says, "not so. But he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is the leader [or 'chief'] as he that serveth." Now, in the first place, these words themselves imply that one of the Apostles was actually chief among the rest, and that he was bound to practise the greater humility because of his greater dignity. The first in rank was to be the "servant of the servants of God."† Then our Lord proceeds: "I dispose to you, as My Father

\* 1 Cor. x. 4; see also Is. li. 1.

† The phrase actually often used in formal documents by the Sovereign Pontiff.

hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat at My table in My kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Now observe what follows. "And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat." The word "*you*" (as Protestant commentators observe)\* is in the plural, and manifestly relates to *all* the Apostles. See then the consequence; our Lord, referring to the Apostles in general, addresses them *through St. Peter*. This, however, is not all. "But I," continues our gracious Lord, "have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith fail not. And *thou*, being once converted, *confirm thy brethren*."† I will venture to paraphrase this passage according to what I think you will allow to be its obvious meaning. "A fiery trial is approaching, which shall sift thy faith like wheat, and that of all those, My Apostles, whom I address in thy person. But it is for thee especially that I pray, and for them in and through thee. Thou shalt deny Me, and they all shall forsake Me; but thy faith will not fail, for I will pray that it may stand fast. Then, do thou, in thy turn, perform towards them the office I have discharged towards thee, by confirming them in the love of Me."

From the Last Supper let us pass over the great events of the next three days, and resume the thread of our narrative in the concluding chapter of St. John's Gospel. The "sifting" which our Lord predicted, as the crisis preparing for all His Apostles, has come and is gone. Satan has been let loose, and done his utmost against the princes of the future Church; but he

\* D'Oyly and Mant's Bible. . † St. Luke, xxii. 24—32.

has not prevailed. Faith has been shaken in its very strongholds, but grace has triumphed. The terrible searching has ended in the expulsion of the chaff, and the preservation of the wheat. The transition is as rapid and as complete as that, so familiar to the Catholic, from Holy Thursday, with its strange associations and exciting prospects, to Easter Sunday, or rather Wednesday,\* when all is changed except the Unchangeable, who has met us after the Three awful days, with the consoling "I am that I am" of the Easter morning.† But now, even the Resurrection has become a familiar idea; its first announcement is past; the joy of the morning has come after the heaviness of the night; and He who is the same to-day as yesterday, and for ever, as to-day, is still with us, in the abiding presence of His glorified Humanity. Just parallel to this, is the spirit and tone of that sweet picture which is given us in the Twenty-first chapter of St. John's Gospel, where our Risen Saviour meets a portion of His Apostles at the Lake of Galilee. The disciples have so far recovered from the agitation of the days before, that they have even returned to their former employments, and go about their daily duties in as quiet and leisurely a way as if nothing had happened. You might fancy the whole interval a blank, and that you were reading the description of the olden time, when Peter and Andrew, and the two sons of Zebidee, were casting their nets into the sea, or mending them on the bank, as our Lord found them some three years

\* On which day the Gospel of the Mass is the narrative of the appearance at the Lake of Galilee.

† "Ego sum qui sum," the antiphon of the Benedictus at the Lauds of Easter Day.

and a half before. There is a marvellous identity in the circumstances. Again they launch into the deep, and cast their nets, and toil all night and take nothing. Again, their Lord meets them and works a repetition of His former miracle, and they drag their nets to shore, teeming with prey, yet unbroken. What a lovely picture it is! The lake is placidly still, or gently ruffled under the breezes of the spring. The flowering shrubs, which are said yet to fringe its banks, are just putting forth their vernal blossoms. At the bidding of the Lord, the holy fishermen launch out, and speedily draw back into the boat their heavy dripping net, and the memory of the former miracle removes all doubt as to who the stranger is. So John, the beloved disciple, says to Peter, "It is the Lord." "Then Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him (for he was naked) and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the ship." When Peter and John were on their way to the holy Sepulchre, "John did outrun Peter;" but now Peter is foremost in the race of love. Arrived at the shore, they find "hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith to them; Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught." Simon Peter obeys the word. "He went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. And although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus saith to them, Come and dine. And none of them who were at meat durst ask Him, Who art thou? Knowing that it was the Lord. And Jesus cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish in like manner."\*

\* St. John, xxi. 7—13.

Who could have foreseen what great results were to flow out of these tranquil beginnings? The Church is to be perfected in its organization on the spot where its foundations were first laid, by the side of the Lake of Galilee, and just after a miracle so emblematic of its Catholic office and its elastic capacities. All the Apostles had helped to cast the net, but it is Peter who draws it to shore; and full as it is, it does not break. This is one characteristic property of the Catholic Church; her powers of comprehension expand with the occasion; and captures which would burst in sunder a net of human fabrication, serve but to manifest the unbounded grasp of that which is cast into the deep at Christ's word, and drawn to shore by Peter's hand.

"When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter" (addressing him by the name Barjona, as when He first called him, and when He planted the Church upon that Rock), "Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou Me, more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: FEED MY LAMBS. He saith to him again: Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: FEED MY LAMBS. He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved, because He had said to him the third time: Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him, FEED MY SHEEP."

Yes, dearest Lord, we accept Thy word. And are not we too "Thy people and the Sheep of Thy pasture?" Eternal thanks to Thee that Thou

: hast gathered us into Thine own true Fold, under  
: him to whom Thou didst in these words give that  
: Fold in keeping. And remember, Thou hast  
other sheep besides, who are not as yet of this  
Fold; direct towards them Thy compassionate  
eye and bring them home, whether they be wan-  
derers from Thy true Fold, or strangers to it,  
that so there may be "One Fold under One  
Shepherd" gathered to Thee in the unity of the  
See of Peter!

And here I close my argument.

## NOTE ON GALATIANS II.

THERE is no part of the New Testament which has more frequently been alleged by Protestants against the doctrine of St. Peter's Supremacy, than the Second Chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. I believe that a careful consideration of that chapter will issue in the conviction, not only that the Protestant arguments based on it are without foundation, but that its real bearing is most truly and decisively in the opposite direction. For myself I am confident, not merely that it does not *disprove* the doctrine of St. Peter's Supremacy, but that it very emphatically corroborates that doctrine.

The arguments on which Protestants rely are chiefly four:—1. The tone of verse 6; 2. The order in which the Apostles are named in verse 9; 3. The tone of verse 11; and 4. The general drift and rhetoric of the whole chapter. I will consider these four arguments in order.

First, as to the sixth verse. This runs in the Protestant version as follows: "But of those who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." Now this is understood by many Protestants to contain an earnest assertion, on St. Paul's part, of his own perfect independence; a kind of protest, that he recognizes no one of the elder Apostles as able to teach him anything whatever: to imply, in a word, some certain disparagement of them as compared with himself. Dr. Bloomfield, for example, one of their most authoritative commentators, thus paraphrases the verse: "Be their dignity or reputation as great as it may, it is not so great as to render it necessary for me to be taught by them: those who were thought something great, in conference added nothing to my knowledge of the Gospel." Now it may be true enough that St. Paul's knowledge of Christian Truth, derived as it was from the direct teaching of God, was not inferior even to St. Peter's; but it is

quite certain that in this verse he is not making, or even indirectly implying, any statement of the kind. A very little attention to the context will show this most irrefragably. He speaks in these two chapters of two different visits which he had made to Jerusalem. What was his motive in these visits? Of the first he says (chap. i. ver. 18): "I went up to Jerusalem *to see Peter*." Here the word "see" is a most inadequate version of the original. Even Dr. Bloomfield says that this word "implies an expectation of seeing something more than ordinary." And St. Chrysostom, whose authority is particularly great as speaking the same language, comments: "He said not, to see Peter, but to visit Peter; as they say in becoming acquainted with great and illustrious cities."\* In his first visit to Jerusalem, then, it is abundantly plain that St. Paul was actuated by none but the most respectful, I might even say reverential, feelings towards St. Peter. Now here, what does he himself state as the cause of his second visit? He tells us in verse 2: "Lest I should run or had run in vain." Before considering the precise meaning of these words, nothing is clearer on the surface, than that he puts himself into personal communication with the elder Apostles, in a state of feeling most opposite to that which Protestants suppose.

What is the precise meaning of this verse 2? Some commentators, full of Catholic zeal, have considered it to mean: "Lest if I did not make sure of agreeing with Peter, my labours might be vain." But such an interpretation is contrary to the doctrine of St. Paul's inspiration; and also to his words in the first chapter (ver. 16), as to his "not conferring with flesh and blood." The meaning undoubtedly is that given by Estius and other Catholic commentators: "Lest, by being misunderstood, and thought to differ in doctrine from the earlier Apostles, my labours, both past and present, should be frustrated and deprived of good result." I would earnestly beg any Protestant objector to consider, whether he can even imagine any sense of the words before us substantially different from this. If he cannot, the argument is very direct and obvious. The one reason, it appears, for St. Paul's being admonished by God to visit Jerusalem this

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\* Quoted by Mr. Allies in his "Rock of St. Peter."



second time, was the great impediment to his labour which arose, from a suspicion that he differed from the earlier Apostles. I ask, then, is it *probable* that, after having distinctly stated this, he should immediately *increase* that suspicion by referring to those earlier Apostles in a tone of disparagement? Here, then, is one reason why it is absolutely impossible that ver. 6 can mean what Protestants suppose. And, as one reason may be found in the words which immediately precede, so another equally cogent may be found in those which immediately follow. For he lays great stress in this address to the Galatians (see ver. 9), on the fact, that these great columns of the Church gave him the right hand of fellowship, and assigned to him the Gentiles as his special province. Is he, then, blowing hot and cold in the same breath? If he lays the greatest stress on their sanction of his teaching, is he likely, in the very same sentence, to express indifference and almost contempt for their opinion?

It would be too minute for our present purpose if I were to state and defend that interpretation of ver. 6, which is commonly given by Catholic commentators. Those who care to see it may readily consult Estius or Cornelius a Lapide. I have already shown that some explanation, totally different from the Protestant, is peremptorily required by the *context*. But I think any fair person will admit that, even as regards the literal and simple sense of *the words*, the ordinary Catholic version is to the full as legitimate and unforced as any which can be devised. I will only, therefore, make a passing reference to the phrase, "seemed to be something." That this phrase implies no disparagement is manifest, were it only for this circumstance, that it is substantially repeated in ver. 9, where his direct purpose is to *magnify* the importance of "James and Cephas and John." But our writers have shown that there are various passages of Scripture, where the Greek word, so translated, is used in a sense most suitable to the present context. The phrase, "those who seemed to be something," undoubtedly means "those who were justly in repute;" "those who were, on good grounds, highly thought of:" not "those who seem what they are not," but "who seem what they are." So Luke xxii. 24, which is translated in the Protestant version, "There arose a strife among them which should be greatest," runs in the original, "which of them *seems* to be greatest." Again,

Mark x. 42 :—"Those who *are accounted* to rule over them," is really "those who *seem* to rule over them," that is, "those who bear *visible* rule."

I will not conclude my reference to the earlier part of this chapter, without showing the indications contained in it of St. Peter's supremacy. We have already seen that St. Paul's attitude towards the Apostolic brethren at Jerusalem, taken as a whole, is undoubtedly one of deference. He comes to consult with them under special divine inspiration : why ? Because it is essential to the success of his work, that he shall be recognized as preaching in strict accordance with their doctrine. And so, in ver. 9, it is from those other Apostles, and not from St. Paul himself, that the arrangement emanates of his devoting his labours to the Gentiles. The Apostolic body at Jerusalem then, taken collectively, possess some real ecclesiastical authority over St. Paul. On the other hand, that St. Peter is superior to the rest of that body, to St. John and St. James, is at once evident from another fact ; for it is to *him*, and not to *them*, that is committed (ver. 8, 9) the Apostleship of the Circumcision : and this, though St. James was actually the Bishop of Jerusalem. Moreover, another prerogative of St. Peter is here incidentally unfolded. St. Peter, by his very name, is the corner-stone of the Church ; yet St. Paul expressly mentions that it is our Lord Himself who is the Chief Corner-stone. And so here, in a manner precisely parallel, whereas St. Paul expressly calls St. Peter "the Apostle of the Circumcision ;" elsewhere (Rom. xv. 8) he calls our Lord by the appellation, so strikingly similar, "the Minister of the Circumcision." And it is obvious to remark, that, just as Jesus Christ was not the less Lord and Redeemer of the whole Church, though specially Minister of the Circumcision,—so St. Peter also need be none the less Ruler over the whole Church, though in a special sense Apostle of the Circumcision.

In a word. Being much distressed at the false reports, circulated among his disciples, that he taught a different Gospel from the older Apostles, and having no doubt shown his grief to God in prayer,—he came up to Jerusalem, by God's direction, to compare notes with those Apostles who were there collected. On comparison, the most perfect agreement of doctrine was found to exist between him and them ; and it was decided that he should continue his

labours among the Gentiles, while they gave themselves to the Jews. One kind of active communication, however, was to be kept up (ver. 10), viz., that he was to send up from time to time contributions from his own disciples for the poor Christians at Jerusalem. And on this, as we see in many parts of his Epistles, he did in fact bestow continual attention.

The second objection, which was named at starting, is really so insignificant, that a very few words will suffice to dispose of it. After such a fact as that which we have seen, viz., that St. Peter is called the "Apostle of the Circumcision" in preference to the very Bishop of Jerusalem himself, it is indeed a small matter that the *name* of that Bishop (St. James) should chance to be mentioned in ver. 9 before that of St. Peter. Since, however, that objection has gravely been made, it is perhaps more satisfactory not to leave it without a direct reply. The point noticed as unfavourable to St. Peter's supremacy is that, in an enumeration of three Apostles (Gal. ii. 9), he is mentioned not (as we might expect upon the Catholic hypothesis) first, but second. The order, as it stands, is this, "James, Cephas [or Peter], and John." Father Passaglia proposes several considerations important to this question, from which the following are selected:—"If the above be actually the order in which St. Paul wrote the names (a matter far from certain), still it is to be observed that order of enumeration (unless, as in the case of the Lists of the Twelve Apostles given by the Evangelists, the contrary be plainly intimated) is not, in itself, a certain proof that relative degrees of dignity are meant to be expressed. Thus, there is no doubt that among the Three coequal Persons of the Blessed Trinity, the Eternal Father is truly first in order, and the Eternal Son, second. Yet we find this order actually reversed (2 Cor. xiii. 13). Again, as cannot be too often observed, all the Apostles possessed universal jurisdiction; a fact which establishes a marked difference between *their* mutual relation, and that between the successors of St. Peter and any ecclesiastical authorities whatever. But again, there is an obvious reason for naming St. James before St. Peter, in a list of the three Apostles who gave the right hand of fellowship to St. Paul and St. Barnabas. The place of their meeting was Jerusalem, of which city St. James was Bishop. Now, is it not in the highest degree probable, that St. James would be actually

the first of these three Apostles whom St. Paul would see? and especially, since St. Peter was frequently absent from Jerusalem, while St. James was constantly in residence there. And what more natural than that he should enumerate them in the order in which he *saw* them, without reference to questions of prerogative?"

The third argument dwelt upon by Protestants (and it must be confessed far more plausibly) rests upon that part of the chapter which begins with ver. 11. And though it is not absolutely necessary for purposes of controversy, yet it will conduce to far greater clearness of idea in regard to the precise point at issue between the Apostles, if I make one brief explanation. I will explain then the obligation, or rather non-obligation, of the Jewish Ceremonial Law on the conscience of Christians, according to the view universally received in the Catholic Church from the days of St. Augustine.

The Jewish Ceremonial Law ceased to be obligatory, whenever and wherever the Gospel Law was sufficiently promulgated. From the very day of Pentecost, so soon as the Gospel was sufficiently promulgated to the Jews in any place, the Ceremonial Law ceased to bind them. Yet, on the other hand, for several years, as theologians express it, it was not *deadly* although *dead*. That is, though the Jews were not *bound* to practise it, yet they were fully permitted to do so. And the chief reason of this permission was, that they were in general so obstinately attached to their ritual, that the attempt suddenly and without preparation to have required its abandonment, would have placed an obstacle, humanly speaking insurmountable, to their reception of the Gospel. The Apostles, consequently, in making Jewish converts, not only were silent as to any obligation of giving up the Jewish Ceremonial, they went even further; for, being Jews themselves, they actually practised it, and waited a more convenient time for declaring their full message on the subject. From this, again, it naturally enough followed, that so soon as Gentiles began to be received into the Church, many of the Jewish Christians called upon *them* also to observe the Jewish Ceremonial Law. This claim, however, as I need hardly say, was firmly and consistently rejected by the whole Apostolic body.

Here then was a most difficult matter of practical conduct. There was no difference of *dogma* on the subject

between the Apostles, not the very slightest. But how to steer a true practical mean, not unduly pressing truths on the prejudiced, and yet not unduly compromising the cause of truth, this was a most difficult task. St. Peter for some time, while residing at Antioch a city where Gentile converts greatly abounded, used his Christian liberty (ver. 12) in rejection of the Jewish rites as to eating and drinking. But when certain of the more bigoted Christian Jews came down to Antioch, he thought it better to cease from doing so, lest they should receive scandal and possibly fall from the faith. "Fearing those who were of the circumcision" (ver. 12), does not of course mean that he feared anything they could do against him—that he feared their ill opinion or the like—rather he feared *for* them. Thus (chap. iv. ver. 11) St. Paul says, "*I fear you*, lest I should have laboured in vain among you." And so St. Peter *feared* these Jews, lest, if the full truth were prematurely forced upon their notice, they might seek relief from their perplexity in actual apostasy. Accordingly (ver. 13), his course of conduct is called by St. Paul a "simulation." The Apostles had all long practised this "simulation;" St. Paul himself had frequently done so. They had observed the Ceremonial Law, just as though they thought it obligatory on them; fearing lest otherwise the Jewish converts might receive scandal. Nothing then could be more natural than these two facts: first, that St. Peter should so act; and secondly, that the other Jewish Christians, including St. Barnabas, should be led by him to practise the same course. It was but doing the same thing again which they had always hitherto done.

Yet it was not less natural that St. Paul should see the whole matter in a most opposite light. Just as St. Peter by his habits was led specially to realize the possible perplexity of the *Jewish* Christians, so St. Paul was no less led thereby to consider the very serious evil probably accruing in regard to the *Gentiles*. His argument, as I imagine, was of the following kind:—"Things cannot again be as they formerly were. To take a step backward, can never possibly be the same thing with not having taken a step forward. So long as the Apostles in any place observed the consistent practice of Jewish ceremonies, the case was different. But to continue for a considerable period eating with the Gentiles, and then

cease to do so, is in fact to put an actual pressure on the Gentiles in a wrong direction. Such a procedure must act on them, as a direct inducement to give up their Christian liberty, and take on themselves that yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." That the word "compel," in ver. 14, means no more than this *moral* pressure, or strong inducement, is admitted by Protestant commentators no less than by Catholic; and is indeed perfectly certain from the whole context.

On this view, then, three important particulars are abundantly manifest. First, there was no difference, nor the remotest tendency to difference, on any dogmatical subject between St. Peter and St. Paul. Secondly, there was no resistance, nor the slightest vestige of resistance, on St. Paul's part, to any command imposed on him by St. Peter; for there *was* no such command whatever. Thirdly, as to their *end*, both Apostles were in most absolute agreement. Both Apostles desired that all observance of the Ceremonial Law should be brought to a total end within the Church, so soon as such termination could be made consistent with the avoidance of evils which would be still greater than its continued practice. The whole difference was on the point of practical prudence. Would their common object be promoted or retarded by such conduct as that adopted by St. Peter? On this point, there is no doubt that St. Paul was perfectly correct in his views. He saw most truly, that the Jewish Christians (ver. 14) were far from "taking those steps, which were directly conducive to the advance of Gospel truth." This is undoubtedly the most accurate version of the original; see also ver. 5. Consequently (ver. 11), he "withstood St. Peter to the face," because of his justly reprehensible procedure. No fair person, nay I may add no *unfair* person, can possibly see, in this most reasonable freedom of remonstrance, any approach to a disparagement of St. Peter's Ecclesiastical Supremacy.

Nay, as our writers have often observed, in St. Paul's way of enunciating this fact, there is an obvious *allusion* to this Supremacy. "I withstood him to the face." The very form of expression implies a certain boldness of act. To differ ever so strongly from one whom he regarded as in all respects his equal, would hardly have been expressed by so strong and forcible a phrase. And the circumstances of the case supply us with another argument—with another

proof of the fact, that St. Peter held a higher place than St. Paul in the estimation of contemporary Christians. For we find that St. Barnabas himself, St. Paul's constant fellow-labourer, between whom and St. Paul no shadow of difference had yet arisen, who is mentioned in the chapter immediately preceding as having received *with* St. Paul the commission to the Gentiles—even St. Barnabas was led by St. Peter's superior authority to follow *his* conduct rather than St. Paul's.

I come, then, lastly, to the fourth objection, based on the drift and rhetoric of the two chapters. "Surely it is most plain on the surface," an objector may argue, "that St. Paul's very object throughout is the claiming to himself an authority, supreme and absolute in its own order; an authority, derived from God by direct commission, and independent therefore of the earlier Apostles. Even granting, for argument's sake, that St. Paul's resistance to St. Peter at Antioch may be sufficiently explained, yet why should St. Paul recount all this so very emphatically, six or seven years afterwards, to the Galatians? Or why does he dwell so earnestly (chap. i. ver. 16, 17) on the fact, that immediately after his conversion, his 'communication was not with flesh and blood;' and that for three years he had no intercourse with the earlier Apostles? Why does he regard this fact as so important (v. 20), that he even attests it with an oath? Why, lastly, does he assure us so earnestly and so pointedly (chap. ii. ver. 3—5) that he withheld all concession to the 'false brethren,' and refused to allow St. Titus's circumcision? What motive can possibly be assigned for all this, unless a motive which is fatal to Catholic doctrine, viz. the vindicating as his just due, a personal and independent authority?"

I reply, in the first instance, that, even were it true that there are some statements in these chapters of which Catholics are unable to perceive the motive, it is absolutely certain that there are others of which Protestants can give no account whatever. One single verse (chap. ii. ver. 2) gives more difficulty to Protestants, than all the above passages together can give to Catholics. Let any Protestant set himself seriously to the study of this verse, and he must perceive the truth of what I say. St. Paul, it appears, was summoned by revelation to compare his teaching with that of the earlier Apostles, "lest haply he

should run, or had run, in vain." What *can* this mean in any Protestant view? One Protestant commentator (Alford) tells us that in this phrase "there is a slight tint of Pauline irony;" though what that means I have not a notion. It is not, however, this verse alone. Consider St. Paul's extremely respectful way of referring to St. Peter (chap. i. ver. 18), and the great stress which he lays, in chap. ii. ver. 9, on the sanction received by him from the Apostles at Jerusalem. Surely we may ask, in return, how are any of *these* statements reconcilable with that general argument and bearing which Protestants are so fond of attributing to these two chapters? All then that the argument could possibly prove would be this; that both sides are baffled, and that the real key to St. Paul's full meaning has not yet been found.

I assert, however, confidently, that we can give to the whole of these chapters a most rational and unforced interpretation, on the Catholic theory. All that appears necessary for such a purpose, is to make one hypothesis; and this, an hypothesis which every one must acknowledge to be in itself most simple and probable, nay obviously suggested by the facts of the case.

It is perfectly certain, and admitted by Catholics and Protestants alike, that St. Paul's steps were dogged at every turn by active and vehement opposers of his teaching. It is equally certain that these judaizing opposers claimed the authority of St. Peter and the earlier Apostles as on their side, and charged St. Paul with the introduction of mischievous and dangerous novelties. The hypothesis which I make grows at once out of this admitted fact. That in a certain sense St. Paul possessed the sanction of St. Peter and the rest, was surely too manifest and notorious to admit of dispute. I suppose, therefore, that these judaizers, when pressed, confessed so much, but gave their own account of the fact. They maintained that St. Paul was double-faced; and that he preached a most different doctrine when in communication with the earlier Apostles, from that which he inculcated on his Gentile converts. And there were circumstances in St. Paul's life, undoubtedly, on which such an accusation might be plausibly founded. Such was his circumcising St. Timothy (Acts xvi. ver. 3), "because of the Jews who were in those parts." Such also was the fact recorded in



Acts xxi. ver. 26. In both these cases, as in many others St. Paul, being a Jew, practised the Jewish Law, expressly for the purpose of avoiding all offence to the Jews. To this general habit he himself alludes (1 Cor. ix. ver. 19—21, also chap. x. ver. 32, 38). I am not here explaining how St. Paul's conduct in all this was most perfectly reasonable and consistent; though this might most easily be done. I am but citing it in corroboration of my hypothesis. And let this hypothesis be once conceded, the whole of the two chapters thence acquire a most natural and intelligible character. We may paraphrase them as follows:—

“These, my opponents, declare to you that they have learned their views of Christianity from St. Peter and the elder Apostles. I totally deny it; and I have, in fact, far more means than they have for knowing the mind of those Apostles. Yet you must not understand the case to be, that you have only to balance *their* interpretation of Peter's meaning against *my* interpretation. My Gospel is indeed the very same as Peter's; but it was not from Peter that I learned it. It was not from flesh and blood that I received my instruction in Christian Truth. He who so mercifully Himself converted me, Himself also taught me. I call God to witness that it was three years after my conversion before I even saw Peter; even then I saw no other Apostle except James, and was for some time longer unknown by face to the Jewish Christians altogether. It was not from them that I ever professed to learn the Gospel.

“However, when I found reports to be so sedulously spread as to my differences from Peter, I was warned by God to go up to Jerusalem, in order to confer with him and the other chief columns of the Church. I fully knew, indeed, that the most perfect harmony of doctrine would be discovered between us; and so the event showed. They had nothing to add to the Gospel which I preached; and I received from them a distinct commission to occupy, as my peculiar province, the preaching to the Gentiles. It is with their express and direct sanction that I have preached to you the Gospel. It has been said against me, that in my communications with them I habitually conceal the most characteristic parts of my teaching. The most obvious facts are sufficient to refute this. At my first visit to Jerusalem, I had seen no Apostle except Peter and James, and remained there only fifteen days, so

that there was but little opportunity for such hypocrisy. But in this other visit, which took place fourteen years after, a circumstance took place which shows how very openly I spoke. For I peremptorily refused, though strongly urged, to allow Titus's circumcision. I refused this, in order that I might avoid even the external semblance of concession to those who would destroy Gospel liberty. Nay, shortly afterwards I went further still. I remonstrated publicly with the very Prince of the Apostles, when the necessity seemed to arise; when he showed himself wanting in clear perception as to that line of conduct, which was called for, at a particular crisis, by the principles which we held in common. If my teaching then possess his full sanction, as my very opponents hardly deny, that sanction most certainly cannot have arisen from any concealment practised by me in his regard."

The same view will also throw light on an incidental passage which occurs later, and which it is difficult otherwise to explain. "If I preach circumcision," asks St. Paul, "why do I suffer persecution?" (chap. v. 11) as if he were answering a charge brought against him, that he was not *consistent* in his opposition to the judaizing party.

Here, then, is a paraphrase of the whole two chapters from a Catholic point of view. I shall be glad to see if one is even *attempted* which shall be consistently Protestant. That the attempt, if made, will terminate in signal failure, I have no doubt whatever.



## DISCOURSE XV.

## OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

I.—APPARENT INCONSISTENCIES IN THE SCRIPTURE  
TESTIMONY.

THE limits of my work are now reached, though the capabilities of the subject are far from being exhausted. There are other doctrines of the Catholic Church, quite characteristic of her in comparison with all Protestant bodies, which are supported by the overwhelming testimony of the Bible; such, for example, as the office of the Angels in the Evangelical dispensation. There are likewise other features of the Gospel religion which might easily be shown to have no historical nor actual counterpart except in the Catholic Church; for instance, its estimate of the claims of the Poor, and again, of the blessedness of suffering. Indeed, the illustration of the Beatitudes from the Lives of the Saints would form a complete subject in itself. Much more, again, might be said than there was found room for in this series, upon the "Reproach of Christ," as the peculiar inheritance of the Catholic Church, inasmuch as to amount to what might be fitly called a kind of secondary "note" of her Divine origin. I had also contemplated noticing the Example of Christ, as realized in one or other of

the Saints: a subject touched upon by Father Faber,\* in the way, not of evidence, but, what is much better, of devotional instruction. There are, as it strikes me, very different and even dissimilar personal characteristics of our Divine Redeemer which might be illustrated from the biographies of various Saints; His zeal is reflected by St. Ignatius, His labours of love by St. Vincent of Paul, His holy sweetness by St. Francis of Assisi; while in St. Philip we trace those winning ways which earned him the reputation of laxity. But the subject is one to which I feel myself unequal, though I am sure it is to our point. Again, there is a whole department of Scripture testimony to the Catholic Church which in this series has scarcely been more than alluded to; I mean what may be called its *deductive* evidence. Thus, although the Scripture texts directly in favour of Purgatory, Prayer for the Dead, or the Intercession of the Saints in glory, are not very conclusive, I believe, to Protestants; yet all these articles of our teaching (and I will add "Indulgences" also) flow quite naturally from Scripture intimations on the effects of sin, the holiness of God, the general efficacy of prayer, &c. Thus, my first answer to objections founded upon the incompleteness of my subject would be to remind the objector of the conditions by which the argument, as originally proposed,† was avowedly limited. I said expressly, that the *direct* evidence of the Bible to the Catholic Church was stronger on some points than on others; though therein I did but state a fact, not make a concession; for, in truth, the ground of the Catholic

\* Triduo on St. Philip Neri.      † See Discourse I.

Church (even as far as the Bible is concerned) is in no respect weakened by any such statement.

For (besides all this indirect and inferential evidence which remains in reserve) I must once more ask you to bear in mind the very important and even fundamental character of the doctrines, and (yet more) of the principles, which have formed the subject of our inquiries in the present Course. What amount of weight you may be inclined to attach to the Scripture evidence brought to bear upon those doctrines and that leading idea of religion, it is not for me, of course, to say; but of this I am entirely satisfied, that, if the point of this argument shall have been made out, the Catholic is the "Church of the Bible," no matter what else she teaches or does not teach, and with what warrant of Scripture authority. For no article, however important, which is mere matter of detail, can be even plausibly set in comparison as bearing upon this argument, with those questions of the Method of inculcating religious Truth, and the Form of the great Ecclesiastical Polity which were discussed in the three latter Discourses.

I know so well how *any* argument in favour of our religion sets persons up into an attitude of objection, that I find it very necessary, for our mutual convenience, to request your kind attention to the series of positions which, in the Introductory Discourse, I undertook to establish.\* I have nothing to do with objections to Catholicity in general; nor with objections which are beside my own immediate subject. The only question now before us is, whether anything, and what,

\* See page 20.

can be said in disparagement of the Scripture evidence already adduced on the various matters of which we have treated? And I can think of but two shapes which such possible objections can assume. It may be said (1) that the evidence of the Bible on these matters is conflicting: (2) that it is defective. To these two heads therefore I shall briefly address myself in this and the next Discourse.

It will be scarcely expected of me to discuss in detail, the various Scripture passages which may conceivably be quoted against any of the articles of teaching, or characteristics of religion, hitherto noticed. Such a process would evidently require a course of Lectures by itself; moreover, my desire throughout has been rather to instruct than to dispute; and it is merely because my subject is controversial in fact, though not in intention, that I am compelled to advert to objections at all.

Moreover, I have been careful to notice, in the proper places, or in later Discourses of the series, the most considerable of the Scripture passages likely to be urged against my argument; such as those relating to the dignity of the Blessed Virgin, and to the ecclesiastical prerogatives of St. Peter. Difficulties, again, about Sacramental and Ceremonial Religion, likely to arise from the seeming contradictions of the Bible, I have fully gone into, and, as I hope, set at rest in the Discourse headed—"Inward Religion the One Thing Necessary." As to the other subjects treated in the foregoing series, I really do not see what Scripture passages can be even colourably produced upon the anti-Catholic side.

But so far as any valid objection may have

been either overlooked, or imperfectly treated, the considerations I am about to throw out must be understood to express the *kind* of answers by which I should be prepared to meet such objections.

1. Objectors to the Scriptural evidence (I do not say of Catholicism, but) of *any* coherent body of doctrine, should be careful that they do not expect too much from the Bible in the way of *teaching*. The Bible is, as I have before observed, so exceedingly unsystematic in its disclosures of revealed truth, that to expect perfect consistency in all its (apparent) statements is quite to mistake its character and object. If, indeed, this account of the matter were suggested simply by a regard to the necessities of *Catholic* controversy, it might be suspected of being got up for the occasion. But, as I shall presently show you, every sect in the Protestant world has precisely the same difficulty to get over (the same in kind, but infinitely greater in amount), which the Catholic Church would find in making out her Creed, as it stands, from the palpable and incontrovertible testimony of the Bible. If you want to see doctrines finely rounded off, you must certainly not look to the letter of the Bible. The Bible contradicts itself (in appearance, of course, I mean) far more flatly than it contradicts *any* article of the Catholic Church. How thoroughly unlike it is to a formal treatise! With what a noble contempt of criticism, with what an unfaltering consciousness of truth, does it throw out propositions of the most conflicting sound, which yet are proved capable in practice of the most beautiful adjustment! Thus our Saviour says, that "He came not to bring



peace on earth ;”\* the very object, surely, of His Gospel. He says, that “He and the Father are One,† yet that the Father is greater than He.”‡ He pronounces in one place, that “Whoso is not against Him is for Him;”§ in another, that “Whoso is not for Him is against Him.”|| The wonder is, not that the Bible is apparently against this or that Catholic doctrine (if, indeed, for argument’s sake I must allow that it is so), but that it attests, with such unequivocal distinctness, such undeviating consistency, such unbroken unanimity, that great characteristic of the Catholic Church, her authoritative teaching through the agency of a corporation, or body politic, governed according to a constitution in strict keeping with Apostolic precedent.

The above remarks comprise the substance of all the answers I am prepared to make to objections against my argument, founded upon apparent Scripture contradictions to any particular article of Catholic teaching. But the following remarks may seem to make plainer what I desire to say under this head of the subject.

A great amount of pains spent in attacking the Catholic Church for its contrariety to the Bible would have been far more profitably employed in ascertaining her real doctrines, than in dressing up phantoms for the mere sport of annihilating them. Two or three texts occur to me at the moment, among many others, the whole force of which, as arguments against us, arises from a misconception of our doctrine. A host of Catholic verities is supposed to be laid prostrate by the

\* St. Matt. x. 34.

† St. John, x. 30.

‡ Ib. xiv. 28.

§ St. Mark, ix. 39.

|| St. Luke, xi. 23.

words "There is one Mediator, &c."\* But the applicability of this text to the point of the objectors vanishes, the moment it is considered that the mediation of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints is, according to our ruled doctrine, a thing different, not in degree only, but in kind, from the Mediation of Christ. The same is true of the argument against the Sacrifice of the Mass, founded on the words, "Christ was offered *once*,"† which would constitute indeed a valid objection to the Catholic Church, did she teach that Christ is offered in the Mass in the same way and under the same form in which He was offered on the Cross, but is quite irrelevant to the case, since she teaches expressly that He is not. Nor, again, is it any objection to Sacramental Absolution to urge, that "none can forgive sins but God alone,"‡ since it is only as God's "ambassador"§ and representative that the priest claims to discharge that momentous office.

Another course of proceeding which I cannot but think might set limits to this discussion, is to propose to ourselves the question, whether certain texts of the Bible be not more difficult of satisfactory explanation upon the hypothesis of the Catholic religion being false, than certain others, apparently of an opposite tendency, upon that of its being true? This is a consideration, which applies especially to the subjects treated in the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth of these Discourses. I mean, that you must provide a really conclusive answer to the multitude of passages which, in their obvious meaning, favour

\* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† St. Mark, ii. 7.

‡ Heb. ix. 28.

§ 2 Cor. v. 20.

the doctrine of Authoritative Teaching, and of a Visible Church with an organized constitution and a Supreme Governor, before you can even challenge a hearing for any amount of texts bearing, in your judgment, against *particular* doctrines or practices of the Catholic Church.

Moreover, I wish you, my non-Catholic hearers, to observe most especially how vulnerable to attack is your own side of religion, when once we come to take our stand upon the apparent contradictions of Scripture to this or that particular doctrine or tenet. Will you meet me on the ground of your own peculiar sect, or system, or will you prefer to join issue upon your common Protestantism? If you stand upon your own distinctive tenets, your case is absolutely desperate. Each religious body, taken by itself, has some Scripture difficulty to "get over." The Calvinist, the Arminian, the Baptist, the Independent, the Presbyterian, the Church of England man (to whichever of its various sections he belong), has some stubborn texts, blowing like an east wind in his teeth, which give his neighbour-denomination, or his party-opponent, a controversial advantage against him. We all consider, I suppose, that War and Oaths are justifiable; yet how easy would it be to make out a case from Scripture against both! Indeed, as you well know, each religious sect as it arises, is a witness to this truth; for it is the short-coming of the predecessor which creates the occasion for the follower. Each new doctrine forms the basis of a new sect, which is meant as a supplement of Scripture truth supposed to be disparaged by other sects; and yet, though so many rivers flow into the sea, still the sea is not full. I know a case of a person, now an excel-

lent Catholic, who was so dissatisfied with the "unscripturalness" of *every* existing Protestant religious body, that he set himself to make out from the Bible a religion of his own. I cannot tell you precisely what were its tenets, but I know that one effect of the process was that he ceased to attend any place of worship. Such an attempt, in the hands of a man thoroughly sincere, could have but one consistent result. He could find no rest for the sole of his foot in this dreary and baseless expanse of waters; so he came to the Ark, and prayed to be received into it; and from its windows he can now look out upon the ocean of doubt, which he has quitted for ever, with thankfulness for himself and prayer for others. The cause of Scriptural religion, depend upon it, would not be promoted by taking refuge from the tenets of your own particular sect, in a general or abstract Protestantism: for, in the first place, such a position is that of practical infidelity; and, in the second, it still leaves without a solution the testimony which every part of the Bible not so much yields, as clamorously proclaims, against the principle of Private Judgment, as the way of arriving at the truths of Divine Revelation.

And there is one consequence, far more serious than any I have yet mentioned, which follows directly from the process of grounding objections to doctrine upon the authority of individual texts. Be well assured, my brethren, that this is a mode of controversy which the infidel can employ against you far more effectually than you can adopt it against us. You are not indeed (at least as yet) Catholics, but you "profess and call yourselves Christians," and under any view of that

honourable name which can be justified, you are bound to believe, and I am sure do believe, that Jesus Christ is God. I should be more thankful far if you were Catholics; but I am thankful, deeply so, if you seriously and effectually believe and appreciate even this great truth. Now you think (and rightly think) that the Godhead of our Divine Redeemer (in the sense of that term in which we apply it to His Eternal Father and to the Holy Ghost) can be satisfactorily established from the letter of the Bible. But once admit the principle that doctrines depend upon the apparent meaning of single texts, and you give the Arian, who denies that Christ is truly God, a clear and decided advantage over you. There are many texts in the New Testament, capable indeed of a Christian and Catholic explanation, but which, if divorced from other texts and subjected simply to the test of Private Judgment, are great and undoubted controversial difficulties in the way of the true doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a statement which I am unwilling to certify by quotations; because, since we are all agreed that the great verity of Christ's Godhead rests upon an unassailable foundation, it is neither my duty nor my wish to suggest Scripture difficulties in the way of it which both my limits and my argumentative position preclude me from answering as fully as the case requires. Still, you may take what I have just stated as absolutely certain.

And now, in conclusion, while I am engaged in replying to objections, I anticipate an objection to my reply. It will be said, I suspect, that the whole of this latter argument is of the nature of what is familiarly called a "tu quoque" answer,

the effect of which kind of logic is, that, though it may destroy your adversary's case, it does not go a step towards establishing your own. "All you have just done," it may be urged, "is to prove that the objection which we have brought against the Catholic religion on the ground of its apparent contrariety to certain portions of the Bible, applies to our own systems likewise; to Protestantism in general, nay, to Christianity itself. This is perhaps quite true; but what does it show, except that all religions together are involved in doubt, or, at any rate, that there is nothing at all in the argument of your present discourses, the purpose of which is to prove that the Catholic is the true Scriptural religion."

To this, which seems to me a very natural objection, I reply as follows:—

It behoves you, my non-Catholic hearers (unless indeed you are prepared to surrender your ground), to be very careful how you grant to me that I have succeeded in convicting Protestantism of "unscripturalness." Its avowed *basis* is "the Bible only," and if the Bible give testimony against it, either as a whole or in its several sections, you have no appeal from such an adverse decision, and the ground is cut away from under you.

The case is otherwise with us. The Bible is indeed one, but it is not the only one, of the great sources from which we profess that our religion is derived; and even could you prove your case against my present argument, Catholics would still have another position to defend against you, and at great odds in their favour, since you would have abandoned your own ground without having one equally favourable to occupy in exchange.

But further, if I have in any degree made out my point in these discourses, I have undoubtedly done a great deal more than simply prove that certain doctrines of the Catholic religion have a preponderance of Scripture testimony in their favour. My point is, that the Bible unequivocally testifies not merely to single doctrines of the Catholic Church, but to doctrines *characteristic* of that Church in contradistinction from all existing religious bodies; that it testifies, besides to what is much more than any single doctrine, namely, to the whole *idea* of our religion, as involved in all its teaching and exemplified in all its institutions; and, what is far more, again, than any partial testimony, that the Bible recognizes, to the absolute exclusion of any other theory of religious proof, that especial method of teaching under all its necessary conditions, to which the Church in union with Rome has ever been, and still is, the single Witness, both against the world at large, and against every rival claimant who has ever disputed her pretensions or arrogated her authority. And the testimony which the Bible gives to this point is unaffected by even the semblance of contradiction. Whereas the Divine authority of the Church is the one point amply sufficient to prove all a Catholic holds; upon this the testimony of the Bible is so irrefragable, that nothing can even plausibly be urged against it. No candid reader of the New Testament, who opened it for guidance, would ever dream of any mode of arriving at the knowledge of Divine Truth, except the Voice of the Living Church as its one appointed Guardian, Teacher, and Interpreter.

## DISCOURSE XVI.

## • OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

II.—ALLEGED DEFECTS OF THE SCRIPTURE  
TESTIMONY.

It may be said, still in the way of objection, that, even if the alleged inconsistencies of the Bible testimony have been explained, our Scripture argument labours under the further disadvantage of serious flaws and defects. If, for instance, the Blessed Virgin be all that Catholics lovingly believe her to be, why, it will be asked, does she not occupy a more prominent place in the Gospel history? Why are we left without undeniable Scripture proof of doctrines which form so important a part of our religion as Purgatory, and the Invocation of Saints? And how, above all, is it, that the Apostles never speak plainly of certain articles of the actual Catholic Faith as if they were part of the Christian doctrine; never themselves invoke the Blessed Virgin or the Saints, nor distinctly pray for the dead, nor enjoin these practices of devotion upon their disciples, nor imply that any such were habitually in use among the Christians of their time? These instances will at least exemplify and illustrate the kind of difficulty which I am here supposing, even if they do not wholly represent it.



In dealing with objections of this nature, it is very important to determine, whether the omissions, or supposed omissions, attributed to the Scripture testimony apply to the Bible in its character as a revelation, or as a history; or whether they relate to the actual practice of the Apostles and the state and mind of the Apostolic Church as it may be collected from that portion of the New Testament which is not historical, but didactic; I mean, of course, the Epistles.

If then, in the first case, it be meant that the Bible is not a Formulary of Catholic Doctrine, this is no more than was admitted and indeed maintained at the outset. If, as I said in the last Discourse, you will tell me what religion the Bible *does* teach, and prove your point by Evidence, I will readily yield the Scripture ground to you; for certainly I do not pretend that it *teaches* the Catholic Faith. But I am quite satisfied that you cannot produce one doctrine, except some of those taught by the Catholic Church alone, which the Bible consistently and unequivocally recognizes; still less such a body of doctrine as, after allowing fully for all its omissions, it *testifies to*, though it does not *teach*, on our side. On the contrary, there are religious truths which you hold in common with ourselves which the Bible intimates just in the same dark and indirect way in which it implies, without openly declaring, some of our characteristic, although not primary doctrines, such as Purgatory, or the Invocation of Saints; I may mention as an instance the case of Infant Baptism. Here is a practice (bearing directly upon doctrine) which I have no doubt the great majority of my present hearers regard as altogether Scriptural. Yet the evidence of

the recognition of this practice in the Apostolic Church, as far as the mere letter of the Bible goes, is exceedingly weak ; and it is only as an inference from the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration (which many Protestants, who approve of the baptism of infants, altogether deny), that it can be at all conclusively proved by the testimony of the Bible only. Once admit, indeed, that Baptism is a Sacrament, and the Baptism of Infants consistently follows. But if that ordinance be accounted merely as the external sign of a covenant, it is certainly reasonable to argue that it should be deferred till the contracting party is of mature age, unless, indeed, we be prepared to fall back upon the Jewish Dispensation as our authority for a Christian rite. Infant Baptism, like Prayer for the dead, or the Invocation of Saints, is a natural and obvious *deduction* from the direct evidence of the Bible ; but you have certainly no stronger Scriptural case against some of the practices which we follow as against all Protestants, than have the Baptists against yourselves and us in common.

The allegation, therefore, of defects in the Scripture testimony to the Catholic religion, as applied to the Bible in its character of a revelation, must be met in the general by disclaiming any such idea of the scope and use of the written word of God as this objection presupposes. To revert to what was said in the Introductory Discourse : When once we divest ourselves of the popular notion of the Bible as a work dogmatic in its character, and complete in all its parts, and regard it as, what it surely is, a collection of separate documents, agreeing, indeed, in their genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration, but

differing in the various degrees of dispensational development under which, and in the immediate purpose with which, they were written, we must, I think, cease to look in its disclosures for any full and consistent exhibition of Christian Truth; and if we will not go the length of regarding it as an instrument of teaching in the hands of a living authority, at least we can employ it for no more than a guide to the quarter in which we are to expect an authoritative direction as to its use, and a supplementary provision for the incompleteness and obscurity which itself is the foremost to predicate of its own contents.\* And such a treatment of the Written Word, so far from being disrespectful towards it, is, as a moment's reflection will show, just the reverse. For the instant we begin to apply our own feeble intellects to a process so entirely above their grasp as that of measuring the probable nature and extent of an inspired communication, we surely render ourselves amenable to the charge of "forwarding the Spirit of the Lord," of undertaking to be "His counsellors and to teach Him;" and well may He Himself ask "with whom hath He consulted, and who hath instructed Him, and taught Him the path of justice, and taught Him knowledge, and shown Him the way of understanding."† No, my brethren; "the Spirit breatheth where," and as, "He will;" nor is it for us poor worms of earth to prescribe what He shall record, and what withhold. God alone can interpret His own words. A divinely-appointed guide is the only adequate expositor of divinely-inspired Scriptures.

Again, if we put aside for the moment the fact

\* 2 Peter, iii. 16.

† Is. xl. 13, 14.

of inspiration, and consider the Bible merely in its character of an historical record, it is certainly a work which it is most difficult to bring under the ordinary rules of criticism. Nothing can be more irregular, informal, and (were we speaking of a merely human document, we should say) fortuitous, than its disclosures of historical and biographical truth. Facts of the utmost importance, which are wholly passed over by one Evangelist, are introduced by another with an appearance of simplicity and *nonchalance* which would almost provoke a smile, did we not continually, as we read, abstract the eminently individual character of the witnesses from the aggregate of their inspired testimony. Matters, again, which we would give any price to know, are without Scripture memorial at all. What has become of those "many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written, every one, the world itself, I think" (says St. John), "would not be able to contain the books that should be written?"\* Where are the records of the lengthened sojourn in Egypt; where the annals of the Holy House at Nazareth? What a marvellous infringement of the established canons of literature is this, that the events of seventeen years should be dismissed in a sentence,† while seven chapters are employed in developing the words and actions of as many hours!‡

It is surely, then, impossible to build any argument upon so uncertain a basis as that of the outspokenness or reserve of the Bible. Three of the Evangelists make no mention at all of the

\* St. John, xxi. 25.

† St. Luke, ii. 51.

‡ St. John, xiii.—xix.

following incidents: the birth of St. John the Baptist, the Annunciation, the circumstances attending the Nativity, the Purification, Presentation in the Temple and attendant incidents; they do not give either the *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, or *Nunc dimittis*; they omit the finding of our Lord in the Temple and His discoursing with the doctors; the parable of the Good Samaritan, Lost Sheep, Lost Drachma, Prodigal Son, Dives and Lazarus, Unjust Judge, Publican and Pharisee: the miracle of the woman bowed down by an infirmity for eighteen years, of the cleansing of the lepers, restoration of the widow's son, the cure of the man blind from his birth, the raising of Lazarus, our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus, that with the Jews and His disciples upon the privileges of the Blessed Eucharist, the pardon of the woman taken in adultery, the miracle at the pool of Bethesda, the lengthened discourse of our Lord with His disciples at the Last Supper, many events in the history of the Passion, and several appearances after the Resurrection, to say nothing of other facts equally important. St. Paul incidentally mentions a special appearance of our Lord after the Resurrection to St. James,\* about which the Evangelists are totally silent. Had St. Luke's Gospel perished, we should have had neither *Ave Maria* nor *Magnificat*; had St. John's not come down, we should have wanted the subject of the "Stabat Mater." Three of the Evangelists, as I have already said, are wholly silent about the Annunciation. St. John alone records the presence of the Blessed Mother at the foot of the Cross. Had it then pleased God to give

\* 1 Cor. xv. 7.

us a fifth Gospel, what accessions might it not have made to our stores of divine knowledge, parallel to those which St. Luke has added upon St. Matthew's and St. Mark's narrative, and St. John upon those of all his predecessors!

The Acts of the Apostles are far more orderly and complete as a history than the Four Gospels; yet even they debar us from much information which we might naturally expect, and should certainly have received in a merely human history. What was the character, and what the circumstances, of the Apostolic Worship,—what the form of the Eucharistic Liturgy, and what its ceremonies, or what regulations were made by St. Paul when he “set in order” such matters as were defective or corrupt in the Corinthian practice;\* these and many other questions of surpassing interest are left unsettled in the curt and suggestive method of historical writing employed, for whatever reason, by the sacred narrator. And if the intimations are so brief and cursory, even upon the cardinal and characteristic act of worship, it is no wonder if we are left without any precise particulars of what may be called the secondary and tributary devotions of the Apostolic Church. With regard, again, to the Apostolical Epistles, several considerations may be suggested to account for the omission of any reference to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints.

In the first place, no Catholic of whatever time would think of assigning to such devotions the highest rank among the religious duties of a Christian. Circumstances are conceivable (and in the Apostolic age such circumstances assuredly

\* 1 Cor. xi. 34.

existed) in which the Catholic Missionary of any period might feel it his duty to keep everything in the way of doctrine in the back-ground, except only such articles of the Christian Faith as are quite primary and indispensable. I can imagine him again dispensing his doctrine with peculiar caution in cases where it might incur any risk of serious misunderstanding, or perhaps even irreverent usage. It does not follow in any age of Christianity, that the outward exhibition of the Church is necessarily a complete index to her *mind*.

Let this consideration be applied to the case of the Apostolic time. Here were the Apostles positively hedged in by prejudices of every kind, intensely powerful in themselves, and maintained with the most unflinching determination; the worse portion of the Jews encasing themselves in their traditions, and disposed to believe nothing new without some "sign" which was not to be afforded them; the better sort jealous of the dignity of God to a degree which made them naturally loathe the idea of a Crucified Deity; the Gentiles fastidiously sensitive to the same doctrine, because it revolted against their over-refined feelings, and was preached with a simplicity that grated upon their cultivated taste;\* and the peculiar sentiments of both the one people and the other creating the strongest possible necessity, on the part of a discreet Christian preacher, for withholding any doctrine which could, by possibility, be construed into an encouragement of the idolatry so hateful to the pious Jew, and so congenial to the effeminate

\* See 1 Cor. i. 22, 23; ii. 1—8.

Greek. Conceive, for instance, the motives to such prudent reserve upon the subject of our Lady and the Saints, which would be suggested to St. Paul at Athens, where he found the people wholly given to idolatry,\* or at Lystra, where they were for treating even himself and St. Barnabas as objects of divine worship,† or, again, at Ephesus, where the whole city was wild about the great Diana, and might so naturally have invested our Lady, if brought before them in all her majestic privileges, and all her bewitching sweetness, with the honours of their favourite divinity ! ‡

From whatever cause it may have arisen, whether from the necessity under which the Apostles felt themselves of making the most of their opportunities in order to indoctrinate their disciples with the great elements of Christianity, or from an unwillingness to set habitually before them truths, on the one hand, not elementary, or, on the other, which those disciples might so easily misconstrue ; so it is, that both in their missionary preaching, as recorded in the Acts, and in their didactic course, as given in the Epistles, they seem to have kept hovering about the rudiments of Gospel truth, to the exclusion of subjects which do not enter so directly and practically into the Way of Salvation. The only exception I can observe to this rule, if exception it be, is in reference to the deep and mysterious question of the Divine Predestination in Christ. But then let it be borne in mind, that this controversy was forced upon St. Paul by the circumstances of time and place ; the toughest of all the prejudices which a Jew presented to the

\* Acts, xvii. 16. † Ib. xiv. 11, 12. ‡ Ib. xix. 34.



reception of the Gospel being that which arose from the idea of a merely national election. On the whole, a review of the Apostolic Preaching will, as I think, satisfy you, that while with the unconverted Jew and Heathen the Apostles dwelt upon (with the latter) such questions as the Being and Attributes of God, and (with the former) the fulfilment of prophecy in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, they confined their *direction* of actual converts to matters immediately connected with the one Way of Salvation, or to the removal of prejudices, or to the solution of occasional questions, or to the correction of scandals, or to the arrangements of the local Church. The Epistles, especially those of St. Paul, are most *business-like* documents, eminently corresponding with the Apostolic Letter, or Pastoral, of some holy Pope, or Bishop, of modern times.

But it will be said, the necessities of the time and the circumstances of their converts might be a good reason why the Apostles should withdraw such subjects as the honour of the Blessed Virgin or the Invocation of the Saints into the background of their *teaching*; but how is it that they do not in their own cases appear to have acted upon such doctrines in the way of personal devotion? To which I reply, that we know nothing of the personal habits of the Apostles, except through the medium of their writings, which are all dictated by this spirit of Christian prudence towards their disciples. It would greatly have perplexed the Corinthian and Ephesian converts, if, while St. Paul made these difficult subjects no part of his public instruction, he had broken off

in his Epistles into a fervent apostrophe to our Lady or St. Joseph. I am aware that St. Paul is perhaps the most *ethical* of all the sacred writers of the New Testament; that, more than any, he betrays his individual character in his writings. He does actually break out more than once into passionate addresses to God; but it is a remarkable fact, bearing directly upon the present argument, how very rarely throughout his recorded history, or in his personal writings, he prays to our Lord as a distinct Person of the Blessed Trinity, while of special invocations of the Holy Ghost, so familiar to Christians of a later age, there is, I believe, not a single instance in the New Testament. If, then, the devotional structure of religion was perfected subsequently to Apostolic times in one point, why not in others?

But the time has now arrived when I must remind you once more of the resource upon which the Catholic Church is able to fall back for the solution of the difficulties, and the supply of the deficiencies, of mere Scripture testimony. In claiming to be the lineal descendant and abiding representative of the Apostolic Polity, the Catholic Church claims also to be the inheritor of the great Christian Tradition, which supplies her with the key to the meaning of the written word of God, and constitutes her the ever-present Interpreter of Evangelical Truth. Such oral methods of teaching plainly existed in the Apostolic age itself;\* and it is but the result of the Catholic Church's claim to be the successor of apostolic privileges that she should regard herself as the receptacle and vehicle

\* 2 Thess. ii. 14.

of those unrecorded revelations. To dwell upon this feature of the Church's character is, of course, quite beside my present subject. But the necessities of the argument require me to advert to it as a bar to all objections which I have either overlooked or imperfectly handled. For the effect of such a qualification is this; that, whereas one admitted flaw in the Scripture testimony is fatal to a religion which professes to make the Bible its *sole* rule of faith, many such may be allowed by us without weakening our controversial position even in the smallest degree.

And the same consideration which comes in arrest of your judgment comes also in relief of my own anxiety. If I have laboured under any misgiving during the progress of this inquiry, it has been, lest I might by possibility compromise the Church of my allegiance by quitting the high ground of a teacher in her name, and entering the lists of a controversy in the very outset of which I was compelled to surrender, "for argument's sake," her characteristic principle of Authority. But the compensation of my disadvantage has been this (and certainly it is no mean one), that what I have not produced, that I cannot have imperilled; and that neither the possible exaggerations, nor certain defects, of the view I have given you can even impair, far less destroy, the real strength of that reserve body of proof which remains, unused, at our command.

Yet will not my pains have been misspent, nor your kind attention misapplied, if I shall have succeeded in proving to you even so little as that the *primâ facie* evidence of the Bible is no obstacle to the force of those proofs, and no diminution of

the brightness of those tokens, by which the Catholic Church appeals to your regards and challenges your inquiries for her own sake. Much less can I regret the work if, as I am sanguine enough to hope, it may have been made at least questionable to you in the course of it, whether that *prima facie* evidence be not such as not only to excite no prejudice against our claims, but, on the contrary, to create a strong presumption in their favour.

So will you be led, in the honesty of your hearts, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who has touched them, to enter on that path of investigation whose end is peace instead of confusion, and confidence instead of doubt. Remember that even Isaias promises you the certainty of faith as the peculiar privilege of Gospel times. "The Lord shall not cause thy teachers to flee away from thee any more, and thine eye shall see thy Teacher. And thy ears shall hear the words of one admonishing thee behind thy back, This is the way; walk in it, and go not aside, neither to the right hand, nor to the left."\* May He, who will be the companion of your journey, be also the solace of your rest, as you shall at length come to know Him, by sacramental participation, in "the breaking of bread," and you shall say to one another, in token of what He has done for you, "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?"† And the words of a Saint‡ who has watched your progress, and felt for you in your

\* Is. xxx. 20, 21.

† St. Luke, xxiv. 31, 32.

‡ St. Bernard.

difficulties, will supply you with the language of glowing thankfulness wherein to commemorate your great and eternal gain :—

Jesu, spes poenitentibus,  
Quam pius es petentibus ;  
Quam bonus te quærentibus,  
Sed quid invenientibus !

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Jesu, repentant sinner's Hope,  
To those who seek, how kind ;  
How good to all who search for Thee,  
Then what to those who find !

THE END.

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